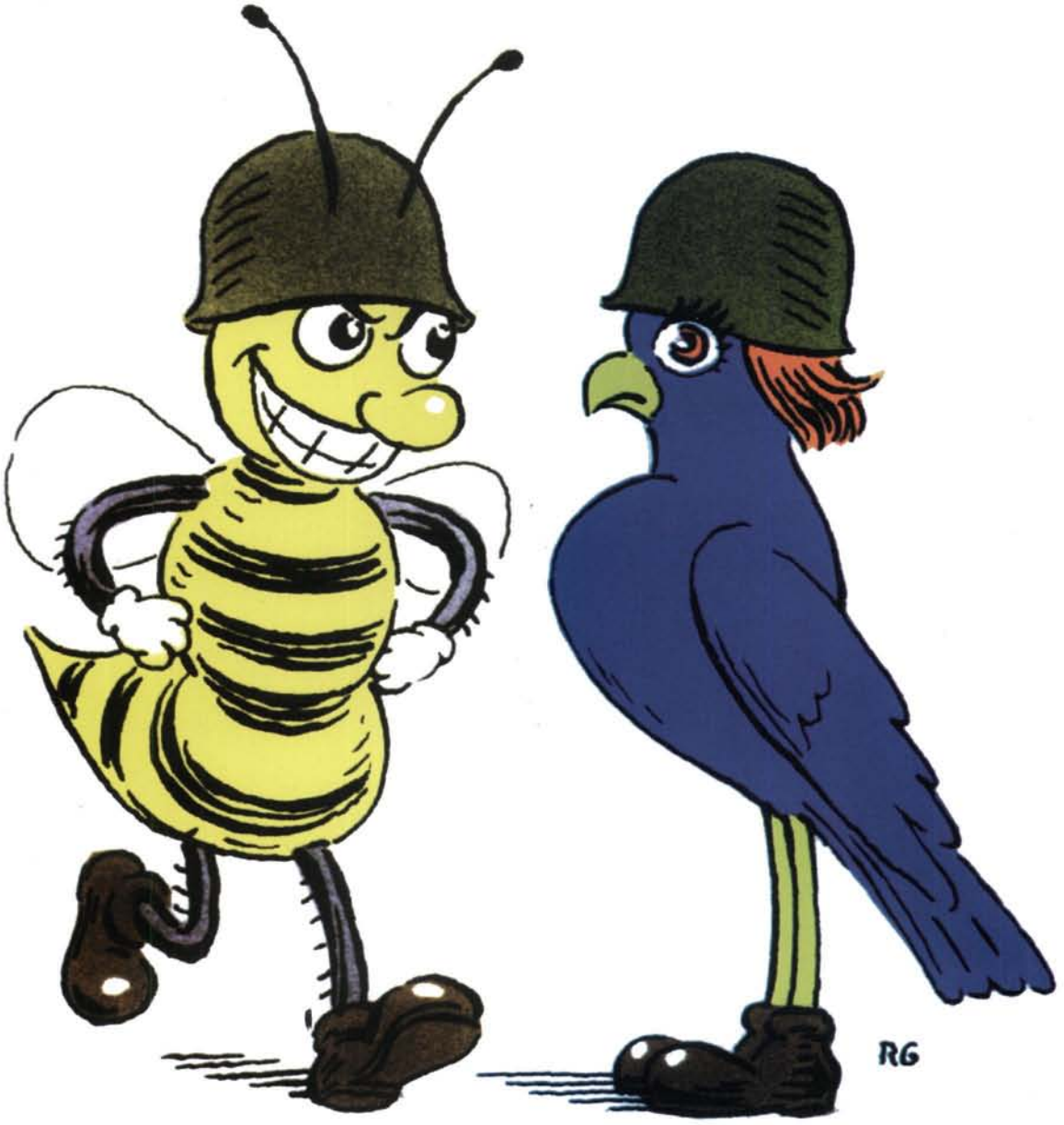
HOW THE WHITE HOUSE LOCKED OUT JESSE JACKSON IN '96

FEBRUARY 24, 1997 • $2.95

# THE NEW REPUBLIC

Dick Morris Sucks His Own Toes—By Nicholas Lemann

# *Sex and the Soldier*




## What the Military Forgot About Men, Women ds and the Bees.

hanie Gutmann

#BXDKDML ******* 3-DIGIT 757
#757SABA11RY007# 012797
HO NWRE 428 S00389
AMBASSADOR COLLEGE
ROY HAMMER LIB
PO BOX 111
BIG SANDY TX 75755-0111

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# The Ticket to Tomorrow

"Working in Japanese schools and with the local government on the JET program deepened my understanding of the culture, language, institutions and relationships in Japanese society."

Nicole Domencic has good reason to be enthusiastic about JET, as the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program is commonly known. From 1987 to 1988, she taught English to high school students in Shizuoka City, Japan, through JET—an experience that helped the students hone their language skills, and gave her an entrée into Japanese society.

JET is just one of many programs that are building a cultural bridge between Japan and the U.S. In 1996 about 83,000 Japanese students were studying in the U.S. through various exchange programs—the largest number from any foreign country. For the past 17 summers now, the Keizai Koho Center, with the National Council for the Social Studies, has sponsored trips to Japan for North American social studies educators who visit local schools and government officials and stay with Japanese families. Here's what two of the participants in this unique program have to say about their experience:

E. Gene Barr, an elementary school teacher and curriculum consultant for the Detroit Urban Japan Project, says, "My Keizai Koho Center Fellowship has resulted in my becoming a real advocate for American students to understand their roles and responsibilities as world citizens." Marcel Lewinski, a teacher at Illinois State University in Normal, Illinois, recalls his Fellowship as "the single most meaningful and educational experience I ever had," and adds that he has since "organized conferences on Japan and helped Japanese middle school teachers prepare a handbook on global issues."

These and other cross-cultural educational programs are building closer U.S.-Japan ties where they really count: at the grass roots. That's the ticket to tomorrow.

**Japan Business Information Center**
KEIZAI KOHO CENTER

© 1997 Keizai Koho Center

The Japan Business Information Center is an independent, non-profit organization affiliated with the Keidanren (Japan Federation of Economic Organizations) and funded by private industry. Write us at 145 W. 57th Street, Dept. 100, New York, N.Y. 10019 (fax: 212-489-6211), or visit us at www.keidanren.or.jp.

This material is distributed by the Japan Business Information Center, which is registered with the Department of Justice, Washington, D.C., under the Foreign Agents Registration Act as an agent of the Keizai Koho Center, Tokyo, Japan. This material is filed with the Department of Justice where the required registration statement is available for public inspection. Registration does not indicate approval of the contents of this material by the U.S. Government.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NEW REPUBLIC

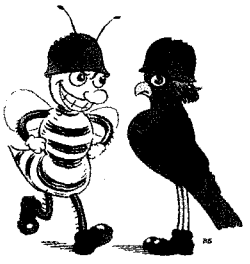
A Weekly Journal of Opinion

FEBRUARY 24, 1997

FOUNDED 1914
WASHINGTON, D.C.
ISSUE 4,284

AMBASSADOR UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY

PO Box 111
Big Sandy, TX 75755



Cover by Eric Baker for THE NEW REPUBLIC. Illustration by Robert Grossman. Article on page 18.

4 **CORRESPONDENCE** Herb Kohl explains himself, France sneers back &c.

6 **MICHAEL KELLY** TRB: PRESIDENTIAL Clinton gets serious about the State of the Union.

7 **THE EDITORS** "MR. GUILTY IS LIABLE" Why the second Simpson verdict was about justice, not race.

8 **NOTEBOOK** Jennings condescends to America, Dick Morris bends to his desires &c.

10 **JEFFREY ROSEN** ANTI-ANTIDISESTABLISHMENTARIANISM The Religious Freedom Restoration Act is one of those laws everyone loves—for exactly the reasons it's probably unconstitutional.

12 **MATTHEW MILLER** CLINTON'S MEDICARE MOUSE The president is being hailed for his willingness to spend political capital to save Medicare. But his new plan does a lot of the former and precious little of the latter.

15 **ROGER SIMON** PRIMARY CARE How the White House cajoled, coerced, sweet-talked and scared Jesse Jackson into not running in the 1996 Democratic primaries.

18 **STEPHANIE GUTMANN** SEX AND THE SOLDIER In today's armed forces, the push is on for gender integration. But in the rush for equality, the American military has forgotten a few things about men, women and the differences between them.

23 **JEAN BETHKE ELSHTAIN** THE HARD QUESTIONS: CIVIL RITES Abusing Oklahoma City.

24 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ON FILMS: MOUNTAINEERS, MINERS *Prisoner of the Mountains* is better than Tolstoi; *Margaret's Museum* is better than it ought to be.

26 **NICHOLAS LEMANN** ACCESS: BOLD AS LOVE *Behind the Oval Office: Winning the Presidency in the Nineties* by Dick Morris

30 **PETER GREEN** WAR AND PEACE Reading, translating, and speaking Homer.

36 **EUGEN WEBER** THE WRITER AS Pprincess *Enchantress: Marthe Bibesco and Her World* by Christine Sutherland

38 **ANTHONY HECHT** POEM *Rara Avis in Terris*

42 **PETER BEINART** BOSTON DIARIST: PATRIOT GAMES

*Editor-in-Chief and Chairman*
MARTIN PERETZ

*Editor*
MICHAEL KELLY
*Literary Editor*
LEON WIESELTIER
*Executive Editor*
MARGARET TALBOT
*Senior Editors*
JOHN B. JUDIS, CHARLES LANE (On Leave), MATTHEW MILLER, WILLIAM POWERS, ANDREW SULLIVAN, JAMES WOOD
*Managing Editor*
PETER BEINART
*Legal Affairs*
JEFFREY ROSEN
*Films*
STANLEY KAUFFMANN
*Theater*
ROBERT BRUSTEIN
*Poetry*
MARK STRAND
*Dance*
MINDY ALOFF
*Photography*
LUC SANTE
*Art*
JED PERL
*New Republic Books* (Basic Books)
PAUL GOLOB
*New Republic Online* (Electronic Newsstand)
BRIAN HECHT
*Contributing Editors*
FOUAD AJAMI, ELIOT A. COHEN, STANLEY CROUCH, JEAN BETHKE ELSHTAIN, NATHAN GLAZER, ANN HULBERT, MICKEY KAUS, MICHAEL KINSLEY, CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER, VINT LAWRENCE, MICHAEL LEWIS, GLENN LOURY, DOUGLAS G. McGRATH, LOUIS MENAND, DAVID RIEFF, ROGER ROSENBLATT, MICHAEL J. SANDEL, MAGGIE SCARF, ROBERT SHAPIRO, RONALD STEEL, E.V. THAW, TOM TOLES, TATYANA TOLSTAYA, MICHAEL WALZER, JACOB WEISBERG, SEAN WILENTZ, ALAN WOLFE, C. VANN WOODWARD, ROBERT WRIGHT
*Special Correspondent*
ANNA HUSARSKA
*Associate Editors*
JACOB HEILBRUNN, HANNA ROSIN, RUTH SHALIT
*Design Consultant*
ERIC BAKER
*Editorial-Corporate Coordinator*
LAURA E. OBOLENSKY
*Production Director*
BRUCE STEINKE
*Production Manager*
HENRY RIGGS
*Assistant Editors*
DEBRA DUROCHER, SUSAN ELLINGWOOD, ROBYN GEAREY, STEPHEN GLASS
*Assistant Literary Editor*
MELANIE REHAK
*Staff Writer*
JONATHAN CHAIT
*Reporter-Researchers*
TARA ARDEN-SMITH, CATHERINE ELTON, SYDNEY FREEDBERG JR., ROMESH RATNESAR

*President and Publisher*
JOAN M. STAPLETON
*Vice President*
JAMES J. McCABE
*Associate Publisher-Advertising*
JENNIFER BARRETT
*Controller*
CHRISTINA R. BONIFER
*Circulation Director*
CECELIA M. STEPHENS
*Marketing Manager*
SHABNAM K. SHARMA
*Advertising Manager*
ASHLEY H. COOPER
*Accounting Assistants*
JACQUELYN M. McCULLOUGH
JEANNINE HARRIS
*Circulation Assistant*
CLAIRE P. STERN
*Advertising Assistant*
KATHLEEN WILEY
*Back Issues and Reception*
MARGO JOHNSON

THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 216, Number 8, Issue 4,284, February 24, 1997. (Printed in the U.S. on February 5, 1997.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated Jan. 6 & 13, July 14 & 21, Aug. 11 & 18, and Sept. 8 & 15, 1997) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. The New Republic Advertising Sales Office (212) 702-4882. Yearly subscriptions, $69.97; foreign, $99.97; Canada, $84.97. Back issues, $3.50 (includes postage & handling). © 1997 by The New Republic, Inc. (ISSN 0028-6583). Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Microform, Canadian Periodical Index, CD-ROM, issue and article copies are available through University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Telephone 1-800-521-0600. Internet mail address: tnr@aol.com Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Subscribers: Please send all remittances, changes of address, and subscription inquiries to Subscription Service Dept., The New Republic, P.O. Box 602, Mount Morris, IL 61054. For subscription problems call 800-827-1289.



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# CORRESPONDENCE

## Cop out

**To the editors:**

While Robyn Gearey's "A Capital Crime" (January 20) indicts the Metropolitan Police Department because they demonstrated a dangerously apathetic and irresponsible regard for the murder of one of [Washington, D.C.'s] citizens, the writer's blatantly racist argument for further investigation into Chet Levitt's murder does much to undermine her point.

After stating that Chet Levitt was a 30-year-old, white professional and not "like most big-city murder victims, a young black man shot by another young black man in a dangerous part of town," she argues that if the police don't solve this crime "what hope is there that it will deal effectively with the more routine slaughter of the poor, or with lesser crimes." Oblivious to her own narrow-mindedness she blathers on, "this is precisely the kind of crime that sends middle-class people fleeing to the suburbs." What a bogus argument for pressing authorities to solve the murder of an innocent man gunned down in his prime! Does Gearey honestly believe that Levitt's murder should take precedent over these other cases because he was a white man?

MAUREEN PEYROT
*Los Angeles, California*

**Robyn Gearey replies:**

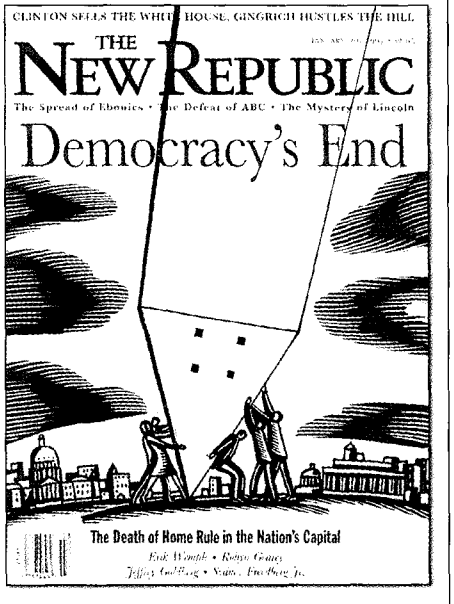
No, of course I don't think solving the murder of a white man should be a higher priority than solving the murder of a black man. But the realities of police work in a big city like D.C. are that crimes like the murder of Chet Levitt stand out, and hence command more attention, because they are rare—as I stated in my article, only 2 percent of murder victims in Washington, D.C., are white men. If even these high-profile cases are badly handled, then there is no hope for the far more common murders of young blacks. This reality may be racist, but recognizing it is not.

## State's rights

**To the editors:**

In your December 23 article "Spy vs. No-Spy," Robert Dreyfuss attacked a piece of bipartisan legislation, the Economic Espionage Act, that I sponsored with Senator Arlen Specter. Dreyfuss's article suffers from two major flaws: a rather significant misunderstanding of the legislation and a tendency to ignore the substantial evidence supporting the legislation.

The bill was partly spurred by the evidence that vital trade secrets in this country are the target of many foreign intelligence services—evidence that Dreyfuss suggests is "practically nonexistent." However, we have compiled an extensive record that includes three separate hearings on this issue last year and significant research and investigations by congressional staff during a ten-year period. For example, in a February, 1996, meeting of his Security Council, Russian President Boris Yeltsin publicly criticized his spy agencies for making poor use of the results of their industrial espionage and urged them to do more to obtain industrial secrets. In addition, the former director of the French Secret Service


CLINTON SEES THE WHITE HOUSE, GINGRICH HUSTLES THE HILL
THE
NEW REPUBLIC
Democracy's End
The Death of Home Rule in the Nation's Capital

publicly admitted that his agency collected industrial secrets from American companies. In 1993, a British newspaper obtained a copy of a French intelligence list that was essentially a shopping list for French spies. And the French did not just want military or national security information; they were searching for an economic edge.

But this dispute over evidence is less important than understanding the purpose of the legislation. Perhaps Dreyfuss was distracted by the title of the legislation. The Economic Espionage Act is not primarily aimed at foreign government-sponsored trade secret espionage. Foreign intelligence operations are only a very small portion of what the legislation seeks to address.

Put simply, the Economic Espionage Act is a federal trade secrets law. It protects all trade secrets and does not require proof that the trade secret implicates national security because the theft of any trade secret is an offense to property rights. Trade secrets are property—"intellectual property" to be sure, but the product of people's hard work nonetheless. This category of property is virtually unprotected, unlike copyrighted material, patents or tangible property.

Dreyfuss claims that as a result of this legislation, the FBI will be turned loose on innocent Americans who are, I suppose, just trying to steal "mere" intellectual property that does not necessarily affect the national interest. He raises the specter that American businessmen will be subject to retaliation overseas. These are legitimate concerns. To deal with this issue we have put many safeguards in place, not least of which is an agreement with the Attorney General of the United States that all prosecutions will be overseen and cleared at the highest levels of the Justice Department.

To those that think this nation need take no action to protect against economic espionage, I suggest they wake up to the reality of twenty-first century conflicts. The computer codes of the 1990s can be just as valuable as the schematics of the cotton gin, power loom and spinning jenny were in the nineteenth century. The threat is real, and America's security will depend on how seriously we take that threat.

HERB KOHL
*United States Senator*
*Washington, D.C.*

**Robert Dreyfuss replies:**

Senator Kohl says that I was "distracted" by the title of the Economic Espionage Act and, so, foolishly focused on spy craft, yet it was not I who chose the title of the legislation; it was Kohl, who now protests that the law is "not primarily aimed at foreign government-sponsored trade secret espionage." Yet the law's very first words target offenses that "will benefit any foreign government, foreign instrumentality, or foreign agent" stealing U.S. trade secrets, and it even contains a specific provision making the law applicable outside the territory of the United States. During its consideration in Congress, the focus of attention—and of Kohl's intemperate warnings—centered on foreign government spies, not your garden-variety thieves of intellectual property. Kohl is quick to mention statements from Russian and French officials about their nations' commitment to economic espionage; yet, like the FBI, which claims to be handling 800 such cases, he fails to cite a single one.

There have always been and will always be industrial spies and secret-stealers. No one questions the need to stand guard against them. But I do question Kohl's insistent alarm that foreign governments are at the center of the threat, or even play a more than marginal role.



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# French letter

**To the editors:**

In "Miracle on First Avenue" (January 6 & 13), TNR believes it worthy of its high journalistic standards to "sneer at the French." I respect your right to editorialize, but I cannot leave some of your assumptions unanswered because they just distort the facts:

(1) "The French ... demand[ed] that his [Boutros Boutros-Ghali's] successor be an African from a Francophone country." Reductive. Foreign Minister Hérvé de Charette repeatedly said what France expected from a Secretary-General of the U.N.: "The Secretary-General is one of the institutions of the U.N. as are the Security Council or the General Assembly.... But also there are two working languages in the U.N. secretariat, English, of course, but also French. Therefore, a good Secretary-General cannot be that if he does not practice those two languages."

(2) "[O]n December 13, a French spokesman ... defiantly vowed that 'France is not a country that is susceptible to pressure.' " False. No authorized French spokesman made such a statement, and I challenge you to prove the contrary. The same day, France decided to join the consensus to elect Mr. Kofi Annan, a very qualified candidate who, by the way, speaks excellent French, as he proved during his acceptance speech on December 17.

(3) "[M]uch of France's beneficence consists of military training for the thugs who protect autocrats and salaries for the civil servants who bloat money-losing state industries." Wrong. As you acknowledge, "France gives considerably more (as a percentage of GDP) than does the United States" and in 1994, according to OECD, all of the $8.4 billion France provided for development assistance went to civil activities: easing the debt burden, food and humanitarian assistance, education, etc.

(4) "France floated three successors.... Each cut his diplomatic teeth representing the kind of authoritarian regime with which France feels so comfortable, and the election of any of the three would likely have introduced the world to another African Secretary-General sympathetic to Jacques Chirac's contention that democracy is a 'luxury' African countries cannot afford." Wrong. At no time did France introduce any candidate into the process. It did consider all the African candidates put forward by their respective countries as is normal in any electoral consultation. It will be for Amara Essy, Foreign Minister of Côte d'Ivoire, unanimously elected president of the 49th General Assembly of the U.N. in 1994; Hamid Algabid, Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference; and Ahmedou Ould Abdallah of Mauritania, former envoy of the United Nations to Burundi, to pass judgment on your contemptible views of what they represent.

As for what is tagged "Mr. Chirac's contention," there is no ambiguous support for democracy in President Chirac's words when he refers to Africa. Were that the case, as you contend, there would not have been more than forty-five African French-, English- and Portuguese-speaking countries participating at the highest levels to the XIXth France-Africa Summit in Ouagadougou, December 6-8, 1996, to reflect together on the concept of Good Governance. Ask the leaders of these African countries—from the president of Botswana to the prime minister of Rwanda—why they decided to join President Chirac at this meeting.

If there is a "Miracle on First Avenue" it is the fact that 185 countries are still able to keep confidence in an organization whose main challenge is to stay alive despite a financial crisis. The payment of all arrears will be one of the keys to the success of the new Secretary-General whom France was happy to contribute to elect.

ALAIN DEJAMMET
*French Ambassador to the United Nations*
*New York, New York*

**The editors reply:**

Pardon our recurrent sneer, but it's silly for Ambassador Dejammet to pretend France only wanted a United Nations Secretary-General who could speak French rather than one from a French-dependent country. As Dejammet admits, Kofi Annan (from the former British colony Ghana) speaks French, and yet, as dozens of newspapers reported, France blocked his candidacy in initial balloting. It's even more disingenuous to suggest that because candidates can only be officially nominated by their own governments, France couldn't have floated the candidacies of Essy, Algabid or Abdallah. Reporters covering the U.N., and their diplomatic sources, widely referred to the three (especially Essy) as France's candidates, which, given the diplomatic irrelevance of their governments (Côte d'Ivoire, Niger and Mauritania), they clearly were. As for France's devotion to African democracy, why then does it station troops in, and provide the bulk of aid to, Gabon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, the Central African Republic and other autocracies? Finally, the French official who said "France is not a country that is susceptible to pressure" is Deputy Foreign Ministry spokesman Yves Doutriaux, quoted in the December 14, 1996, *Washington Post.*

It may be small. But the Bose® Acoustic Wave® music system is definitely an overachiever. The unit features a compact disc player, an AM/FM radio, a handy remote control, and our patented acoustic waveguide speaker technology. And it produces a rich, natural sound quality comparable to audio systems costing thousands of dollars. We know that's hard to believe. So we're ready to prove it. Call or write now for our complimentary guide to this award-winning system. Because, like the system itself, it's available directly from Bose.

Call today. 1-800-898-BOSE, ext. A456.

Mr./Mrs./Ms. ( ) ( )
Name (Please Print) Daytime Telephone Evening Telephone
Address
City State Zip

Or mail to: Bose Corporation, Dept. CDD-A456, The Mountain, Framingham, MA 01701-9168.

BOSE®
Better sound through research®




LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# TRB®

## FROM WASHINGTON

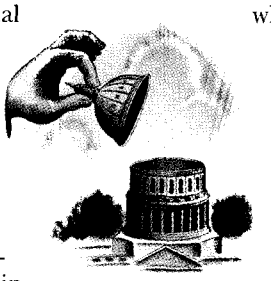
# Presidential

A few weeks ago I suggested, politely, that the balloonlike—bloated but empty—nature of President Clinton's inaugural address raised the possibility that his second term might turn out to be, like his first, fat on blather and slim on substance. The president's second major address of his second term, the State of the Union speech, gives rise to a modest hope that this may not be so.

It was not, of course, a good speech. Clinton is not incapable of giving a good speech in the technical sense, but he is pretty close to it. He is as pedestrian as a postman, and he is under the impression that verbosity is the soul of wisdom. It is not merely that he lets no thought go unuttered, he lets *nothing* go unuttered: no notion, no nostrum, no whim, no fancy, no proposal, no plan, no prayer, no hope, no hype. And the theatrics of an address to both houses of Congress encourages Clinton in this direction. There is nothing quite like an audience of pols with an aisle between them. Anything the president says is certain to be applauded by one side or the other, and the ambidextrous Clinton can find ways to be cheered by both (mothers, children, teachers, cops, World War II, Lincoln, any Roosevelt, democracy, community, technology, unity, diversity, God, man, woman, immigrants, civil rights, the environment, the twenty-first century). The crowd in the rotunda Tuesday night was up and down so often it seemed to shimmer, or jitter, in the air; watching on television, you itched to adjust the vertical hold knob.

There was plenty in Clinton's speech that was silly, or pandering, or disingenuous. (The president simply cannot seem to resist a heartfelt reference to the racist plague of burned black churches, though he must know by now that there was no systematic racist effort to burn churches.) The worst of the speech in this regard was the proposal to give families two years of a $1,500 tax credit toward college tuition and tax deductions of up to $10,000 per year for money spent on any post-high school education. This sort of stuff is the new pork, and it is actually worse than the old pork.

Of the old pork, it could at least be said that, while it may have served the corrupt purpose of buying Senator Bedfellow the votes of a constituency grateful for the new hospital or the new highway, it also did build the hospital or the highway. The old pork may have worked to the benefit of the individual pol, but it also worked to the advantage of society in the aggregate. The new pork is like the micro-credit lending that Hillary Clinton has embraced. Call it micro-pork. It benefits the individual voter and the individual politician, at the expense of almost all voters (or taxpayers), while doing little or nothing for society as a whole. It is simply targeted vote-buying, the creation of millions of individual quid pro quos. You give me $3,000 toward my son's tuition, I give you my vote. If Clinton's education-related tax proposals have any general effect, it will almost certainly be a negative one. It will encourage the universities to keep their costs at unconscionably high levels, thus doing harm in the aggregate and vitiating even the individual benefit.



But these are carps. The inaugural address was fundamentally not serious. The State of the Union was. This speech, at least, strongly suggests a president who has a clear sense of the direction in which he wishes to go, and this direction is by and large a good one. The speech was first of all focused on significant goals. The great things that need to be fixed in this country are all about the restoration of a decent life to working people, the privilege of living in modest comfort, with certain minimum expectations met: good free schools, safe neighborhoods, functioning institutions of government, the possibility of generational advancement. Clinton unambiguously embraced these expectations. The broad domestic goals he set for his second term were these: to produce a balanced budget; to rescue Medicare and Medicaid; to pass meaningful campaign finance reform; to stick hard to the effort to reduce welfare dependency; to extend health coverage; to continue efforts to reduce crime and punish the criminals who have destroyed city life for working families; and, above all, to address the failure of public schools to educate children, especially poor children.

It is true that not all of the specific proposals toward achieving these goals are real, right and serious—the call for a victims' rights amendment to the Constitution was a notable intrusion of the politics of the frivolous—but the main thing is that the goals are right, and serious. An administration that sticks with these goals, and accomplishes them (we'll see about that), will have accomplished a good deal. A government that balances the budget, saves Medicare, finishes the job of welfare reform, imposes real campaign finance reform and sets public schools to hard national standards for reading and mathematics will be able to boast that it has done honorable, important work to improve the lives of the citizens of this country.

And a Democratic president who accomplishes these things will be able to boast of something else. He will be able to say that he has done what many people thought impossible—to restore the Democratic Party as the majority party in America, a party that clearly represents the ideal of an activist government working on behalf of the interests and values of working men and women, and not the interests and values of the dilettante left.

There is much, of course, that could prevent such a happy outcome. There are, among other things, the Clinton fund-raising scandals, and Kenneth Starr, and Paula Jones; it remains entirely possible that the second Clinton term will largely be an exercise in damage containment. And there is Clinton himself, and Clintonism. Dick Morris may be gone, but his doctrine lingers on. This is still a White House that polls before breakfast, and deeply loves the idea of symbolic achievement. It is still the home of many people, including the president, who are susceptible to the belief that the main trick in politics is to produce something that is close enough to an achievement to fool enough of the people enough of the time.

Perhaps we will get four more years of extending family medical leave to cover PTA meetings, and targeted tax cuts for soccer moms, and all the other teeny tiny bennies that have lately captured the White House's fancy. Four more years of micro-pork.

But, for now at least, this speech suggests differently. Clinton spent the first two years of his presidency looking for direction, and the second two years looking for re-election. Now he has both, and a Congress that has so thoroughly spooked itself that it may let the president lead. But he has to lead.

**MICHAEL KELLY**



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NEW REPUBLIC

FEBRUARY 24, 1997

# "MR. GUILTY IS LIABLE"

The anchors had been warned. If the jury finds against O.J. Simpson in his civil trial, don't say "guilty," say "liable." Not *guilty. Liable.* But then Peter Jennings, in one of the most deeply satisfying mistakes in the history of his medium, put it precisely. He meant to say, "Mr. Simpson is liable." What he said was, "Mr. Guilty is liable." The addled anchor was right. It was Mr. Guilty who was liable.

Still, we are cheerless. The new finding against O.J. Simpson is cold comfort for the old finding for O.J. Simpson, because it is marred by a miserable paradox. This verdict that proved that justice is possible in America was interpreted immediately to prove that justice is impossible in America. Two verdicts, two juries, two communities, two perspectives: objectivity's hour was turned into subjectivity's hour. The relativists, the racialists and the legalists went to work.

"Maybe the two verdicts symbolize something about our nation," Alan Dershowitz reflected. Maybe the two verdicts symbolize something about our lawyers. And Dershowitz continued: "It doesn't in any way undercut the correctness of the first case at all." Of course not. Simpson did it but Simpson didn't do it, Simpson is guiltless but Simpson is liable. And Dershowitz continued: "I'm proud of the role that I played. What we did was absolutely right." Fine, and he and his fellow mercenaries should be forever known for it. And Dershowitz continued: "I think this gives a little bit of solace to each of the divided camps. Those who believe he did it will look to the civil verdict; those who believe he didn't do it will look to the criminal verdict." A Jewish joke begins like that, and it ends like this:

—But rabbi, they can't both be right.

—You know, you're right, too.

This is the casuistry of a man who is correctly worried about his reputation. But there was worse. The verdict in Santa Monica was denounced as the expression of the color of the jury's skin. It was, we were told, a white verdict. It was to be expected. As Benjamin Chavis said, "We can no longer pretend that there is one America. There's a white America. There's a black America. There's a brown America and a yellow America, and they are all separate and unequal." This is a perfectly representative formulation of an ugly and illiberal view loose in the land, according to which color is identity, color is epistemology, color is fate, color is being, and the ideal of color-blindness is an illusion cruelly perpetrated by a racist structure of power.

But wait. The racial analysis of life may be ugly and illiberal, but in the matter of the Simpson verdicts, is it wrong? After all, the black jury found for him and the white jury found against him. And the black jury, or many of its members, was rather unambiguous about its solidarity with the black defendant. It might seem as if we really have reached the point in America where fairness is nowhere to be found and all that remains is solidarity. We must be strict and emphatic, therefore, about the lessons of the Simpson ordeal. For those lessons are not separatist ones. The two Simpson trials do not constitute a racially controlled experiment in American justice, because the jury in the criminal trial and the jury in the civil trial *did not hear the same case.*

The jury in the civil trial was presented with more physical and circumstantial evidence. It was not denied information about Simpson's record of brutality toward his wife. It saw the photographs of the shoes. It heard and saw Simpson testify, at length and unbelievably. It deliberated not for hours but for days, and it asked to have evidence brought back for another look. And there were other differences as well. The judge in the criminal trial was cowed by lawyers whose strategy was to keep the jury in the dark about the defendant, except to note that he was dark; but not this judge. And the proceedings in this trial were not carnivalized by the presence of television cameras. For these reasons, we believe that black jurors would have been as affected by the civil case as white jurors.

To believe otherwise is to surrender to the despair that passes itself off as diversity. We are diverse in this country; but we are not altogether different. The solidarity of tribes has not completely usurped the solidarity of citizens. All our heads can still reason and all our hearts can still be reached, if we insist upon it. What Simpson, Cochran, Dershowitz and company unwittingly taught America is that perspectivism is the enemy of pluralism. A pluralist society is not a society of self-infatuated islands. It is a society in which, individually and communally, self is transcended but not rejected. Those transcendences are large and small, and they happen all the time. Or they had better. We share our meanings and our mercies, or we live without meaning and without mercy. •



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# NOTEBOOK

NORTHERN EXPOSURE: When large events occur, and we turn to the tube for breaking coverage, there is a certain, almost comforting predictability. We know Dan Rather will be overheated and a little peculiar, and will treat us to some of the most belabored and convoluted language since Buckminster Fuller discovered the run-on sentence. We know Tom Brokaw will be quiet and sober and intelligent. And we know Peter Jennings will once again use the occasion to remind ABC's viewers just how infinitely superior he is to them and to all the other boobs who make up the citizenry of the backwards nation where it is Jennings's great misfortune to find himself trapped as a millionaire news reader. Jennings is a perfect example of a minor type, the Canadian Who Would Be English, which is a sort of colonial knock-off of the Oxbridge intellectual, and he regards America from under permanently arched eyebrows with a country cousin's version of the traditional British condescending contempt: it is an amusing country in its way, but.... So when the second O.J. Simpson verdict came in Tuesday night, we turned to Jennings to learn, as one must learn from one's superiors, what this event said about our country. You might have thought it said something good: that this is a place determined and able, even in the most trying circumstances, to see justice served. No, no. What the verdict showed, black civil rights lawyer Milton Grimes assured Jennings, was that America was still a racist country, with no justice for blacks, a place where the black man can't even cut his own wife's head off, etc. So true, assented our better from the North. "Milton, you're not alone in this country," he comforted Grimes. "I'm sure you know that." Peter, there is a reason more and more people no longer believe anything the television network news tells them. But we're sure you know that.

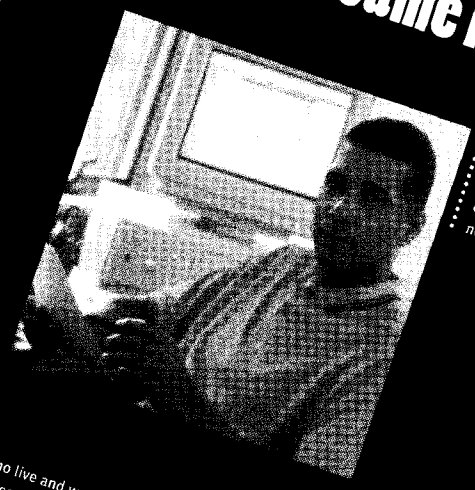
THE EPONYMOUS DICK: Connoisseurs of Dick Morris's libidinous career have discovered a new subplot: homoeroticism. *Village Voice* columnist Richard Goldstein, noticing the belletristic consultant's intense "fixation on his client-in-chief," laments that "Clinton fell victim to his scheming slave, while Morris—the dangerous bottom—got shafted by his designated top." In the *Weekly Standard*, Andrew Ferguson writes that the relationship between the two men is characterized by "volcanic rages, despairing estrangements, abject apologies, sighing reconciliations." And in TNR this week, Nicholas Lemann notes that Morris, who "functioned essentially as a paid mistress to Clinton," carries "all the psychological baggage that goes with being the other woman of a powerful man (See "Access: Bold as Love," page 26). For further reading, we suggest *Between Men*, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's incisive 1985 study of "homosocial desire" among rivalrous alpha males. Sedgwick had a felicitous term for the way such forbidden love, and its consequences, schematizes our erotic relations: "triangulation." In describing how females function as conduits for male homoerotic passion, she notes that successful men develop the "knack of triangulating [their] homosocial desire." David Copperfield, to cite one of her examples, manages to overcome a youthful crush on his dashing chum Steerforth, as he begins a "painful learning of how to triangulate from Steerforth onto women." Sadly, as Dick Morris learned, the triangle cannot hold. As Professor Sedgwick puts it: "Sentient middle-class women ... perceive the triangular path of circulation that enforces patriarchal power as being routed through them, but never ending in them." So *that's* why Sherry Rowlands went to the *Star*.

GUT CHECK: The National Governors' Association came to Washington recently for a confrontation with Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott. Many governors, quite rightly, want Congress to restore some of the benefits legal immigrants lost in last year's welfare reform. Lott semi-publicly rebuked the governors, arguing "it would be very hard for us to come back and open up" the welfare law, lest liberals try to gut it. The governors then ostentatiously retreated and, in a move widely reported in the press, declared that "an equitable solution" to the immigrant issue "could be achieved without reopening the [welfare reform] of 1996." Less widely reported (and almost completely ignored by *The New York Times*) were several other resolutions adopted by the governors which would ... reopen the welfare reform of 1996, and come close to gutting it. They affect not the significant-but-tangential issue of immigrants' benefits, but the core of the reform: the requirement that, in exchange for the ability to run their own welfare programs, states must get a rising percentage of recipients to work for their benefits. "Work," the law declared, in a major breakthrough, should actually mean work, at least twenty hours a week of it, with a few exceptions that were the subject of intense negotiation. Education and training activities would count only *after* recipients had put in their twenty hours. This is the deal on which the governors now want to renege, by demanding the "flexibility" to count "job readiness" activities (e.g. self-esteem classes) and "basic educational activities" (e.g. high-school equivalency courses) as work. But the lesson of previous reforms is that these amorphous educational activities are less effective than work itself at moving recipients into the labor force. Did we mention that the governors also want "drug and alcohol treatment to count toward the work requirement"? The danger is that while it costs money to restore immigrant benefits—requiring some courage in a budget balancing year—watering down work requirements is cheap. So we could end up with the worst of both worlds: poor, deserving non-citizens out in the cold, and poor citizens shunted into a swamp of "educational" non-work, semi-work and fake-work. That would "fix" welfare reform, but good. •

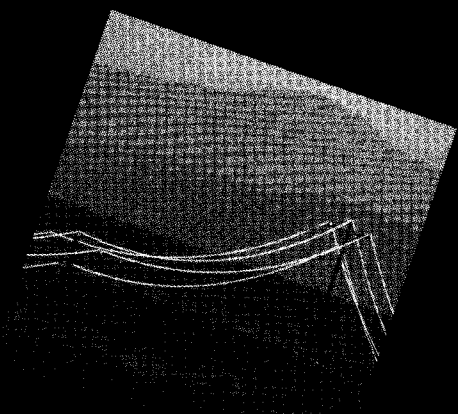


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# One year after the Telecommunications Act became law—



The continued growth of the Internet demands quality local phone networks.



The local phone network... a national asset that depends on investment by companies who use it.

Those who live and work in rural areas rely on the local phone network to reach the information superhighway, even from the end of a dirt road.

MCI and AT&T want to provide local phone service...but only to businesses and the wealthiest 30% of Americans.

# Americans are depending on the FCC to get it right.

A year ago Congress got it right by passing the Telecommunications Act, promising a burst of new investment and fresh competition in all telecommunications services.

One year later, America's local phone companies are doing our part. We've already negotiated more than 440 agreements to open local phone service to new competitors. And we've continued to invest $20 billion a year to make the best phone network in the world even better.

What about the big long-distance companies like MCI and AT&T? They've said their plans for local phone service will focus on businesses and the wealthiest 30% of consumers. That's their business. But they also want the FCC to let them do it without paying the real costs of using the local phone networks everyone else depends on. In fact, the big long-distance companies now want to cut their support for universal phone service by $10 billion.*

That's your business. Because the reliable, universal phone service Americans have come to expect depends on every company using the local phone network also investing their fair share to keep it strong.

It's up to the FCC to make sure that the benefits of telecommunications reform reach all Americans, not just a lucky few.

That's why millions of Americans are depending on the FCC not to let the big long-distance companies off the hook.

*Filed in comments to the FCC by AT&T Corp. and by MCI Corp. on Access Charge Reform, January 29, 1997.

**AMERICA'S LOCAL PHONE COMPANIES—**
*dedicated to keeping our phone network the best in the world.*

U.S. Telephone Association / 1401 H Street, NW / Washington DC 20005

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

**Too much religious freedom.**

# ANTI-ANTIDISESTABLISHMENTARIANISM

*By Jeffrey Rosen*

When President Clinton signed the Religious Freedom Restoration Act in November, 1993, the South Lawn basked in a bipartisan glow. Designed to overturn the Supreme Court's widely criticized decision in *Employment Division* v. *Smith*, which held, in 1990, that the state of Oregon could forbid Native Americans from using illegal peyote as part of their religious rituals, RFRA was supported by an improbably broad coalition of Democrats and Republicans, from Orrin Hatch and Edward Kennedy to the National Islamic Prison Foundation and B'nai B'rith. The president detected a "majestic quality" in the air at the signing ceremony; and Vice President Al Gore called the Act "one of the most important steps to reaffirm religious freedom in my lifetime."

There is, alas, one problem with this paragon of good intentions. It is almost certainly unconstitutional. On February 19, when the Supreme Court hears arguments in *City of Boerne* v. *Flores*, it will be urged to strike down RFRA on the grounds that Congress has no power to overturn the Supreme Court's interpretation of the First Amendment. But RFRA is constitutionally troubling for a more subtle, and more far-reaching, reason: by asserting a sweeping congressional power to displace state law in areas that have traditionally been left to the states, it threatens a radical redefinition of the relationship between the federal and state governments. In its grandiosity (it promises nothing less than the restoration of religious freedom) and in its disregard of constitutional limitations on Congress's power, RFRA is a classic of a genre. The genre is that of the big, bipartisan feel-good law—the Civil Rights Act of 1991 is another example—whose broad appeal derives from its promiscuity. The big, bipartisan feel-good law supports a cause no one is against; it includes all citizens in its smothering embrace; and its eagerness to be loved is the source of its constitutional infirmity.

The *Smith* case, you may recall, held that the First Amendment doesn't require states to create exemptions from generally applicable laws that have the "incidental effect" of prohibiting the free exercise of religion. The Religious Freedom Restoration Act purports to resurrect the much more rigorous test that the Supreme Court had applied in the years before *Smith*. It forbids the state and federal governments from "substantially burden[ing]" a person's exercise of his or her religion unless the government shows that the burden is the "least restrictive means of furthering [a] compelling governmental interest." In the three years since RFRA was passed, it has generated 189 suits by inmates seeking exemptions from prison regulations. Some of these deserve to be taken seriously—prisoners have sued for the right to wear crucifixes, for example—but many do not. In 1996, one prisoner claimed he should be allowed to use drugs because of his membership in the Church of Marijuana; another sought permission to use swords for "burnt offerings."

In the case the Supreme Court is about to hear, the Archbishop of San Antonio, who wants to tear down a local church, says that RFRA requires the city of Boerne, Texas, to exempt the church from its historic preservation laws. The city of Boerne counters that RFRA unconstitutionally violates the "separation of powers," because Congress has no power to reverse the Supreme Court's interpretation of the First Amendment by simply passing a statute. Brandishing *Marbury* v. *Madison*, the city warns darkly that Congress has made a bid to turn the courts into "the most irrelevant branch" by circumventing the constitutional amendment process.

Although superficially appealing, in a high-school civics kind of way, the "separation of powers" argument is specious. Congress hasn't, after all, told the Supreme Court how to interpret the First Amendment; it has created a *statutory* right to religious exemptions that goes beyond what the Court has said the First Amendment requires. It's true that Congress, in drafting RFRA, resurrected a judicial test that the Supreme Court had come to repudiate; but many of the most far-reaching pieces of civil rights legislation over the past thirty years have followed the same pattern. In 1980, for example, the Supreme Court held that changes in voting rules that have the effect of making it harder for minorities to elect representatives of their choice don't violate the Constitution; in 1982, Congress amended the Voting Rights Act to "restore" the legal standard that had prevailed before 1980. Similarly, in the Civil Rights Act of 1991, Congress outlawed employment practices that have "discriminatory effects," resurrecting a standard that the Court said the Constitution does not require.



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A more serious constitutional objection is that RFRA offends principles of federalism. During House hearings in 1992, Ira Lupu of George Washington University warned that RFRA is "probably unconstitutional in its application to the states," because it exceeds Congress's enumerated powers. The Constitution gives Congress the power to "enforce" the rights guaranteed by the Fourteenth and First Amendments; and the Supreme Court has held that this includes the power to create remedies for clearly identified violations of constitutional rights. But it's hard to see RFRA as a remedial statute, since, in the wake of *Smith*, a failure to create religious exemptions doesn't violate the First Amendment. In an opinion upholding the constitutionality of RFRA, Judge Richard Posner noted that, even after *Smith*, the First Amendment forbids laws that appear to be neutral, but were covertly intended to discriminate against unpopular religious practices. Because discriminatory intent is often hard to prove, Posner suggested, Congress could reasonably have passed RFRA as a way of forcing the states to demonstrate that their apparently neutral laws—such as a ban on animal sacrifice, or a prohibition on wearing religious jewelry in prison—weren't actually motivated by hostility to particular religions.

Posner's indulgent view of RFRA is hard to accept. There's little evidence of a national epidemic of intentional discrimination against religious minorities—at least none that Congress considered. And the sweeping scope of RFRA—which carves out exemptions to every state and federal law that happens to place incidental burdens on religious worship—makes it hard to see RFRA as a remedy for intentional discrimination.

Unlike the voting rights amendments of 1982 and the civil rights amendments of 1991, which were limited to discrimination in voting rights and employment respectively, RFRA could potentially affect the implementation of every state law in the country, adopted at any level of state government. It's as if Congress were asserting a general federal police power, broad enough to preempt all the local functions that have traditionally been reserved to the states. If RFRA is constitutional, sixteen state governments ask in their Supreme Court brief, what would prevent Congress from nationalizing all state punishments, in the name of "enforcing" the Eighth Amendment guarantee against cruel and unusual punishment? And what would prevent Congress from federalizing all education, marriage and family laws in the name of "enforcing" the constitutional right to privacy? The question of whether the federal government continues to be limited to specifically enumerated powers has become one of the most hotly contested constitutional questions of our age; if the answer is yes, it's hard to see how RFRA can survive.

In addition to violating principles of federalism, RFRA may also violate the core historical meaning of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment, which was originally designed to prevent Congress from *disestablishing* official state religions, such as Congregationalism in Massachusetts. In a forthcoming article—*his* irresistible title is "Antidisestablishmentarianism"—Jed Rubenfeld of Yale Law School argues that the First Amendment, which says that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion," prohibits Congress from dictating a single rule governing church-state relations for the entire country. This is precisely what RFRA does. By simultaneously forcing states to favor minority religions and preventing states from favoring majority religions (banning peyote, for example, while allowing the ingestion of sacramental wine), Rubenfeld argues that RFRA is "massively and profoundly a law respecting state establishment of religion."

By the mid-nineteenth century, of course, there was growing sentiment that state governments, like Congress, should have no power to establish or support official churches. Now that the Fourteenth Amendment has been construed to require state governments to take their hands off religion, Rubenfeld argues, it would be perverse to allow Congress to put its hands on. This would mean that the part of the First Amendment that prohibits Congress from disestablishing religion has been, in effect, repealed.

The weakness of Rubenfeld's powerful argument is that it's hard to see many of the state laws that RFRA would potentially displace as religiously motivated in any way. The Catholic Church, for example, is now challenging San Francisco's new policy that all organizations with city contracts have to grant the same-sex partners of gay and lesbian employees the same benefits they offer to heterosexual partners. The Archbishop of San Francisco claims that the new domestic partnership law may violate the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. But it would be hard to argue that the domestic partnership law "establishes," or in any way reflects, the religious beliefs of a majority of the citizens of San Francisco.

Good laws, like good judicial opinions, are carefully designed to resolve clearly identified social problems. Their goals are modest, and their effects clearly foreseeable. They look very much like the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1994, a more narrowly focused response to the *Smith* decision, which immunized the ritual use of peyote from federal and state prosecutions. The Religious Freedom Restoration Act, by contrast, is an emblem for what can happen when Congress and the president, flush with good intentions, interject themselves into areas traditionally reserved to the states with a statute so inclusive and abstract that no one could possibly object to it. "The Religious Freedom Restoration Act is something that all Americans can support," the vice president enthused at the signing ceremony. Let's hope this doesn't discourage the Supreme Court from striking it down. •



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

**A new plan, old gimmicks.**

# CLINTON'S MEDICARE MOUSE

*By Matthew Miller*

Laying the political groundwork for the fiscal fights ahead, President Clinton scooped his own February 6 budget submission by unveiling his latest plans for Medicare on January 21. The surprise announcement was his first new proposal since Oval Office negotiations broke down following the government shutdown of the winter of 1996. At that time, Clinton called for savings of $116 billion from Medicare over six years; Republicans said it should be $158 billion. Now, after a campaign that turned that small gap (less than $7 billion yearly in a program costing $200 billion) into deadly GOP "cuts" sure to threaten feeble seniors, Clinton was magnanimous. He announced his coming budget would save $138 billion, "meeting the Republicans halfway." When reporters at a briefing afterwards remarked that the president had thus inched closer to the "cuts" he'd spent a year decrying, Budget Director Frank Raines essentially agreed. "If you define this as you're going to be spending less money than you otherwise would spend," said Raines, "yes, these are cuts...." Raines said he was equally "comfortable," however, describing the plan as "slowing the growth" of Medicare, the very argument Democrats dismissed when Republicans made it.

If these reversals seemed raw even by Washington standards, White House spokesman Mike McCurry offered a rationalization. Yes, he acknowledged, Republicans may have felt unfairly whipped by Medicare on the stump, but then "we don't think that they fairly characterized the president's 1993 economic program with respect to taxation." In other words, you demagogued us, we demagogued you; let's say we're even and move forward.

Welcome to the budget wars, vintage 1997. No doubt there's some moral equivalence between hypocritically scaring seniors to exploit the GOP's "uncaring" image and hypocritically scaring the rest of us to exploit the Democrats' "tax-happy" one. But, given that neither side can be expected to see it in that philosophical light, is a truce possible? That question will preoccupy Washington for the next six months. The first big decisions belong to the GOP, as they react to Clinton's new budget. Clinton's "halfway" step on Medicare, plus his unctuous praise for Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, is more than an attempt to foster a climate conducive to a deal. It's also calculated to make it hard for Republicans to spoil the upbeat mood with the kind of searing attacks to which the president's plan is vulnerable.

For this much is clear: as a matter of pure politics, the president's budget leads with its chin. The goodies in his plan—tuition tax cuts, Internet hook-ups for kids—have already been leaked. Now come the uglies. According to administration sources, while Clinton will repeatedly tout "my balanced budget plan," he'll actually be at least $50 billion in the red in 2002 by the Congressional Budget Office's reckoning. The administration is thus expected to instantly, and embarrassingly, amend its minutes-old budget with a repeat of last year's ludicrous pledge to "suspend" tax cuts and "trigger" new spending cuts later if needed. Clinton's plan scraps current spending caps to hike spending on domestic programs, and adds more federal bureaucrats to administer them. He extends Medicare's trust fund with an accounting gimmick, reverses welfare cuts legislated only last year and offers but a fraction of the Medicaid savings he did last time. The delayed pain in Clinton's spending cuts will bring bogus "backloading" to new heights. The fine print of his ballyhooed plan to bail out Washington, D.C., contains billions in undisclosed costs. And next year's deficit—the one thing this year's actions are sure to affect—will decline only thanks to a one-time selloff of the feds' radio spectrum.

Some of these proposals, like the increase in domestic spending (which has been nearly frozen for five years), are sound. And, individually, Clinton's little chicaneries are no worse than what the GOP has done. Together, however, they let Republicans paint a picture of a president obsessed with gimmicks, unwilling to offer a real balanced budget or control spending: proof positive that only a balanced budget amendment can save us. Indeed, Trent Lott's first tightrope act will require gauging how hard to blast Clinton now for the sake of the balanced budget amendment, without poisoning the well for a deal that might actually balance the budget.

Whichever way the GOP goes, the highest stakes and the most disingenuous rhetoric will revolve, as usual, around Medicare. Clinton is selling his Medicare plan as both a step toward the GOP and a major reform, but the truth is more complicated. A look at its provisions reveals an apparent paradox: while in aggre-



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gate, Clinton appears bolder than the GOP was in 1995, that turns out to require very little. The result is that he's leaving tons of potential savings unrealized while punting completely on essential long-term reforms.

Start with the surprisingly bold Clinton. Most of Clinton's plan involves cuts in projected payments to doctors and hospitals. Yet the multi-year savings numbers that the media typically use to size up these proposals—$158 billion here, $136 billion there—are misleading. That's because these totals vary with Medicare "baseline" forecasts that can swing dramatically from year to year. As it turns out, Medicare costs happily came in lower than expected last year, which prompted the White House and Congress to lower future projections as well. When these projections come down, however, so does the size of most "savings" packages. The same Clinton proposals that saved about $120 billion last year now save billions less—because with Medicare's baseline forecast reduced in the interim, there's less for any reform to cut.

The point is this: the best way to judge any Medicare plan's magnitude is not by such multi-year savings, but by the change it makes in the program's growth rate. In 1995, the GOP's famed $270 billion in "cuts" sounded ominous; but the real way to understand the size of the plan was to see that it slowed Medicare's growth from 10 percent to 6.4 percent yearly.

The White House did not reveal the growth rate it plans for Medicare when it announced the president's new proposal, and it declined to release the figure for inclusion in this article. It's not hard to guess why. The Congressional Budget Office now projects that, absent reform, Medicare will grow 8.5 percent annually. My own estimate, based on information available before the budget's release, suggests that Clinton's new plan will constrain that growth to roughly 6 percent. In other words, Clinton appears to be "meeting the Republicans halfway" by calling for Medicare to grow at a rate actually *slower* than the 6.4 percent that the GOP proposed, and that Clinton spent a year denouncing as savagery to seniors.

Yet, behind this delicious fact, Clinton achieves this slower growth in ways that suggest how timid even a 6 percent constraint on growth really is. Private health inflation, after all, was only 2.9 percent in 1995. So Clinton is leaving plenty of money on the table. Though he shaves projected hospital payments by $45 billion, for example, he's still increasing hospital fees per procedure each year. Yet Congress's official Medicare hospital advisory panel called last month for a freeze on such payments because hospitals are finding their Medicare patients suddenly lucrative.

The White House says Clinton's extension of the law that sets premiums covering physician services at 25 percent of program costs is a profile in courage, because it means monthly premiums will rise modestly. But, even putting aside Clinton's disingenuousness in slamming the GOP for similar proposals last time, those premiums were originally meant to cover fully half of the program's costs, and covered more than 30 percent just a few years back. Clinton has said that while he's open to raising premiums for better-off beneficiaries, he's not proposing it, a coy way of inviting Republicans to hang themselves again if they're in the mood.

Then there's Clinton's $46 billion cutback in payments to HMOs, the big new wrinkle in his Medicare plan. To judge from the HMO lobby, which has gone ballistic, and senators like Ron Wyden of Oregon, who rushed out a statement chiding Clinton for punishing the one sector that's made progress on holding down health costs, you'd think the president was doing something tough. He's not. Clinton deserves credit for putting the issue of windfall payments to Medicare HMOs on the table (the GOP lacked the guts last time), but he's barely denting one of the biggest scams ever to plague the program. The problem, as many analyses have shown, is that Medicare overpays HMOs in areas where doctors have historically practiced a "when in doubt, do more" approach. That's because the feds pay HMOs a fixed rate of 95 percent of what traditional fee-for-service Medicare costs per person in a county. The idea was that this 5 percent "cut" would be the government's way of getting in on the savings available from managed care. But the result is that Medicare payments to HMOs vary wildly across the country, ranging from $2,600 per beneficiary in Nebraska to $9,200 in Staten Island.

This overpayment for past excesses turns out to present a fabulous arbitrage opportunity, because when HMOs bear the risk and are paid a fixed fee per patient rather than getting reimbursed for each service, they suddenly find they can treat seniors just as well for up to 50 percent less. With costs plummeting, but Medicare payments continuing at 95 percent of what they were, it's like having a license to print money. What's more, by recruiting healthier, lower-cost seniors but still getting overpaid for them, these HMOs are able to offer extras like eyeglasses, dental care, prescription drugs and lower co-payments. Everyone wins—except, of course, sicker seniors and those in counties where Medicare isn't overpaying. Those unfortunate souls in effect subsidize the extra benefits the lucky elderly receive. Given that just 12 percent of Medicare beneficiaries today are served by HMOs, the profit potential is in the billions.

In the face of these federally sponsored bonanzas, what has Clinton proposed? A windfall profits tax to recoup what's been lost? A broad requirement for HMOs to bid competitively for Medicare patients, flushing out excess payments? No. The Medicare HMO gold rush would continue basically as is for the next three years. Then, starting in the year 2000, Clinton would phase down the 95 percent fee-for-service payment to 90 percent. In other words, today's huge windfalls will become tomorrow's slightly less huge windfalls. Oh, and one competitive bidding demonstration project will be tried in Denver. Amazingly, the politics here look so tough that Clinton will have to waste political capital to pass even this puny "reform." That's because profiteering HMOs will translate Clinton's move into a "benefit



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cut" for those seniors in overpaid HMOs who now get more for less.

Weak as it is, Clinton's package is still likely to set the outer limits of debate. According to one source, House Ways and Means Medicare chief Bill Thomas of California is saying that "if you think we want to run up the hill and charge Bill Clinton again on Medicare, you're nuts." To be sure, Clinton does dip his toe into the waters of broader reform, allowing doctors and hospitals to form networks to compete with HMOs. Clinton also earmarks $14 billion over six years for teaching hospitals, a crucial step in an era when private insurers will no longer pay extra to subsidize medical training. And to be fair to Clinton, even his modest steps on Medicare risk alienating the status-quo crowd in his party; liberal lights Jim McDermott of Washington and California's Henry Waxman told me the plan pushed the edge of what they could support. Still, only a decade away from the Great Fiscal Collision with our graying boomers, the timidity of Clinton's plan—and his decision to punt to a commission on the system's long-term troubles—is stunning.

Yet punting on Medicare's vexing twin problems of skyrocketing costs and inadequate benefit coverage is not an option for long. Medicare is slated to soar from 2.6 percent of GDP today toward an astonishing 7.5 percent in 2030. Its bureaucratic schedule of fees and payments invites doctors and hospitals to scam the system, while offering few incentives to manage care cost-effectively. At the same time, unlike most private plans and public insurance across Europe, Medicare doesn't pay for prescription drugs and offers poor catastrophic coverage, leaving two out of three beneficiaries dependent on further "Medigap" insurance, employer-sponsored retirement coverage or both. For all these frailties, however, Medicare remains one of government's undeniable success stories. By pooling health risks across 38 million seniors, it has brought security to a segment of the population deemed uninsurable prior to 1965. The trick now is to adapt this success to an aging population in the face of pricey new health technologies.

Unfortunately, the debate isn't framed this way. Instead, almost all public discussion of Medicare's long-term problems concerns the "solvency" of its hospital "trust fund," set to "go belly up" in 2001. Making this trust fund solvent—and this applies to Social Security, too—involves trimming program costs or raising earmarked payroll taxes to keep projected revenues and expenses in sync over an extended period. Yet defining the problem as one of restoring solvency to a segregated set of programs rules out important questions of overall resource allocation in advance. Is it wise or necessary, for example, for us to let Medicare double before long to 5 percent of GDP, at the expense of other social needs? Or does that prospect make the search for more efficient modes of health delivery not just important, but a kind of national emergency? Where, to put it another way, is the Head Start trust fund? Or the trust fund to ease the plight of the working poor? The frustrating paradox of public finance on the eve of the baby boom's retirement is that earmarked trust funds which benefit the elderly tacitly banish such questions, while being politically indispensable in forcing action that might help address them. You don't have to be a pessimist about democracy to know that Medicare wouldn't be an issue this year were it not for the hospital trust fund's looming "bankruptcy."

When "repairing trust funds" is the only way to talk about long-term fiscal choices, however, few proposals can be understood without heavy decoding. Clinton, for example, proposes to extend the solvency of the hospital trust fund by a decade, to 2007, by shifting so-called "home health" services from the trust fund part of Medicare to the part funded out of general revenue. He's doing this because he wants to convince voters the program is "safe" without having to take on the challenge of long-term reform. Is it a shell game designed to make the fund "solvent" while postponing heavy lifting? Yes. But the home health shift per se, which Republicans will attack mightily and the press will condemn dutifully, is nothing to get exercised about—in fact, House Republicans included the very same accounting shift in their version of the 1995 budget bill. In the weird morality of modern budgeting, the Clintonites are on safe ground here: after all, if you fix an illusory "problem" with an illusory "solution," you haven't really done anything wrong.

Bill Thomas, the House GOP Medicare guru, knows all this, and has a different agenda. He's worried that if Congress only enacts something like Clinton's plan, politicians will head for the exits. Thomas will therefore lead the charge against the home health shift to forestall the complacency that comes with a "safe" trust fund. Don't bet on Thomas winning. The result of Clinton's timidity and the GOP's fear of pushing further is that a huge opportunity will be lost. A broad consensus is emerging on the kinds of structural reform Medicare needs, reforms that will now be put off at least beyond the 1998 election while another bipartisan commission fiddles. That consensus—shared, on the left, by analysts like Brookings's Henry Aaron and Robert Reischauer, and Harvard's David Cutler, and on the right by Stuart Butler of the Heritage Foundation—would phase out today's centrally administered price-setting system, and the archaic distinction between "Part A" and "Part B." It would change Medicare to a consumer-based system that gives seniors a range of plans to choose from, makes payments to those plans on their behalf and includes incentives to pick plans that manage care cost-effectively. If seniors preferred a plan that costs more than the federal payment, they'd add more out of their own pocket. Government would regulate health plans' financial soundness and marketing, and guard against plans that undermine the whole system by trying to skim off the healthiest patients. Such reform even has a name.

It's called "managed competition." It turns out Ira and Hillary were right. And so were the Republicans, who called for much the same thing for Medicare in 1995. •



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

**How Bill sandbagged Jesse.**

# PRIMARY CARE

*By Roger Simon*

A Washington quiz: What might be the common denominator among the following events? Bill Clinton's decision to stand tough against Newt Gingrich in the budget battle of 1995, Alexis Herman's appointment as Secretary of Labor, a $3,000 campaign contribution from the Lippo Group to the congressional campaign of Jesse Jackson Jr., and the choice of Santita Jackson to sing the National Anthem at the inauguration of America's forty-second president.

The answer is something that didn't happen: the candidacy of Jesse Louis Jackson in the Democratic primaries of 1996.

At the start of the campaign season, most Americans would have thought of Jackson, if they thought of him at all, as a political irrelevancy. He was an unpaid and ineffective lobbyist for D.C. statehood, the host of a low-rated television talk show, a loser in the fight over the North American Free Trade Agreement, and a man in danger of becoming a self-parody to young African Americans who found more inspiration in the separatist exhortations of Louis Farrakhan than in Jackson's euphonious phrase-making. He had considered running for mayor of Washington, D.C., but had backed off, had considered seeking the executive directorship of the NAACP but had backed off. He was, in short, a man with little to do. And that's what the White House feared. When he had little to do, Jesse Jackson usually ran for president.

And a Jackson candidacy in 1996 was not something the White House could take lightly. It is difficult to remember now just how weak Bill Clinton was as he began preparing for his re-election. His presidency seemed a slow-leaking balloon: the Democrats had lost both houses of Congress, there was Whitewater, Hillary's commodities trading, Travelgate, Troopergate and Paula Jones. The labor unions were still furious over NAFTA, and many African Americans, the Democrats' most loyal voters, had not forgiven Clinton for his treatment of Lani Guinier and for a crime bill they felt victimized the black community. Given this climate, the White House seriously feared a challenge from within the party. And it was not just Clinton who was preparing for it. Bob Dole was practically counting on it.

ROGER SIMON is a nationally syndicated columnist.

"My assumption in early 1995 was that Clinton was very weak and would have a primary challenger by May," Scott Reed, Dole's campaign manager, said after the election. "One of the smartest things [Clinton] did was avoiding a skirmish with Jesse Jackson." By using Newt Gingrich as a bogeyman, Clinton might be able to keep some Democrats from running, but even one Democrat mounting a primary challenge against him might, White House political operatives felt, prove fatal to his re-election.

"Primaries are death for presidential incumbents facing re-election," said Douglas Sosnik, currently White House counselor and then White House political director. "Ask Bush, ask Carter, ask Ford, ask Johnson. All incumbent presidents; all faced primaries; none got re-elected. The Democratic debacle of 1994 was the wake-up call. We wanted to avoid a primary at all costs." It was not that Clinton could be beaten in a primary; he probably could not. But a primary challenge, particularly from the left, could so weaken Clinton that the Republican nominee, even one as hapless as Bob Dole, could finish him off in the general election. "Primaries sap your resources, and you have to spend time talking to your base voters exclusively," Sosnik said. "You have to appeal to your activist wing." And pandering to your activist wing in the primaries can doom you with swing voters in the general election.

The White House had to keep an eye on a host of usual suspects (Bill Bradley, Bob Kerrey, Bob Casey and David McCurdy), but Jackson worried them the most. And there was no question that Jackson took seriously the ideological imperative to challenge Clinton—at least in the media. From 1993 through 1995, nobody was a tougher public critic of Bill Clinton than Jesse Jackson. As Jackson saw it, Clinton had betrayed labor, minorities and city dwellers and had forged a "DLC/Republican alliance" for cynical political purposes. (The centrist Democratic Leadership Council had been co-founded by Clinton in 1985, in part to reduce Jackson's influence on the party.) Jackson went so far as to revive the epithet he knew Clinton loathed: Slick. And Jackson announced he was so "sadly disappointed" with Clinton that he was seriously thinking about running in the Democratic primaries or as an independent candidate.

In the months leading up to the Democratic primaries of 1996, the Clinton White House had no greater



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

priority than the destruction of Jesse Jackson as a political force. There were two traditional ways of dealing with Jackson: scaring him off or buying him off. The White House decided to pursue both.

First, the decision was made that since Clinton was in no position to be tough (in April, 1995, he had to assert in a press conference that he was "relevant" because the Constitution said he was) then at least he could look tough. It's what the White House called "body language," adopting a tough-guy stance that would scare off the potential opposition. Fortunately, the White House had a tough guy on the payroll: Harold Ickes, deputy chief of staff. Ickes, feared inside and outside the White House, was an ideal figure to send the message that, while the president might look weak, anybody who tried to take him on in the primaries would get his block knocked off.

Ickes's first goal was to show Clinton's would-be challengers the money. Though Clinton's fund-raising seems profligate (and irresponsible) now, such a massive fund-raising operation seemed imperative at the time; raising a great deal of money early in the primary season would have a chilling effect on potential challengers. The plan was an immediate success. "The money came in much faster than we thought," Ickes said. "I don't think any president has ever raised money so fast. It surprised us. I think anybody who thought of running [against us] was given serious pause."

But while the White House knew locking up the money would scare off the logical candidates, it also knew that Jesse Jackson's campaigns were not based on logic. Jackson needed very little money to run; he lived off the land, raising money by passing the bucket after speeches and attracting media attention out of all proportion to his chances of actually winning the nomination. Besides, there was another problem with Jackson. There was Iowa.

The 1996 campaign year began with the caucuses in Iowa, a state where Jackson had done relatively well in the past among the small number of liberal activists who dominated the arcane voting process. But neither Clinton nor Al Gore had ever organized in Iowa: Gore had skipped Iowa when he ran for president in 1988 to concentrate on the South and Clinton had skipped it in 1992, because Iowa's favorite son, Senator Tom Harkin, was running that year. In 1995, the White House took a Jackson threat so seriously that it poured $600,000-800,000 into Iowa and $400,000-500,000 into New Hampshire even though Clinton had no declared opposition. "We were prepared for a primary race, and we had a solid field organization on the ground in Iowa and New Hampshire," Ickes said. "We literally had a full-time organization, a campaign manager and a press operation, and they had recruited staffs. We also had an apparatus in other states that could be activated on a moment's notice."

While this up-front effort was taking place, the White House was also quietly working to wall Jackson off from an important power base within the Democratic Party, the nation's African American mayors. These included Dennis Archer of Detroit, Marc Morial of New Orleans, William Campbell of Atlanta, Norm Rice of Seattle, Freeman Bosley of St. Louis, Kurt Schmoke of Baltimore and Wellington Webb of Denver. (Two white mayors, Ed Rendell of Philadelphia and Richard M. Daley of Chicago, were also considered of critical importance by the White House.) In the fall of 1995, Alexis Herman, the White House director of the public liaison office, hosted an informal gathering of black mayors at her home in Washington. Commerce Secretary Ron Brown was also there. The mayors were told that they were the rising stars of the Democratic Party, its next generation of leaders. They would be listened to seriously by the White House because Bill Clinton liked mayors. Clinton shared their concerns and expected the mayors to share his concerns—to support him and not Jesse Jackson in the event of a Democratic primary.

The need to deter Jackson also played a significant role in the most important policy and political decision of 1995 and 1996, the decision to face a government shutdown rather than strike a budget deal with Newt Gingrich and the Republican Congress. From the beginning, there was violent disagreement on this matter within the White House staff. "The shutdown was playing with dynamite," an administration official said. "There was a faction of Dick Morris and [pollster] Mark Penn who wanted a deal and a faction of George Stephanopoulos and Harold Ickes who felt most deals would have compromised our values because they were so far out of the mainstream." On some days Clinton leaned toward a budget deal and on others he leaned against it. What finally brought him around to Stephanopoulos's and Ickes's way of thinking, however, was the politics—the fear of a primary challenge.

It was made clear to Clinton that if he signed a budget that compromised on Medicare and Medicaid, Jackson, as well as others from the left of the party, would oppose him in the primaries. "I told the president that if we did accept any deal, we increased the chances for a primary," Ickes said. "The vice president said it would be a death knell." Rahm Emanuel, now senior White House adviser, agreed. "If we had bought a budget deal in July-August, Jesse would have gotten in," he said. "That's because in order to get a deal, we would have had to make cuts unacceptable to hard-core party activists."

Clinton refused the deal and his popularity rose. This helped scare off potential Democratic rivals, but not Jackson. Choosing the thirty-second anniversary of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech, Jackson announced on August 28, 1995, that he was going to enter an urban straw poll called CityVote. If he did well in it, he might then challenge Clinton for the presidency.

The White House recognized the danger. Clinton himself had clipped an early story about CityVote from *The New York Times* and sent it to Ickes with the note, "We better keep an eye on this." Ickes did more than keep an eye on it, he kept both his feet on its windpipe. Using Don Fowler, co-chairman of the Democratic Party, to publicly denounce CityVote as useless and harmful, Ickes also made calls to mayors encouraging them to drop out of the project. Mayors in Baltimore, Boston, Cleveland and



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Rochester decided CityVote was not such a good idea after all. And in New York, the Board of Election Commissioners decided CityVote would not be on the ballot. Some of the nation's mayors had wanted to use CityVote to fine-tune their fund-raising and political operations, but Ickes and Fowler persuaded them otherwise.

Several White House aides thought this was overkill. "Some said, 'Where is [CityVote] going? It's fun and games. Let them have their fun,' " Ickes recalled. "But we moved on it very concertedly." By the time CityVote was held, it had been beaten up so thoroughly that most of the media ignored it.

At the White House, Ickes's efforts are still remembered with awe. "Ickes *crushed* CityVote," Rahm Emanuel said. "He sucked the oxygen out of it." Presidential spokesman Mike McCurry agreed. "CityVote never reached critical mass, and that was due to the sheer tactical brilliance of Harold navigating us through this."

Ickes's real stroke of brilliance, though, was to offer Jackson a carrot even though he had just whacked him with a stick. Ickes wanted to crush Jackson's candidacy, not Jackson. "Nobody is a more loyal Democrat or has registered more voters or supported more Democratic candidates," Ickes, who worked for Jackson in 1988, said. "Jesse Jackson can proudly wear the title Mr. Democrat." And so a fairly large group including Ickes, Stephanopoulos, Herman and McCurry made themselves available to Jackson. Jackson wanted to be respected, which included being listened to, not just on his own behalf, but on behalf of his constituents. Listening to him could mean a real investment of time, often at very late hours, but the group cooperated. And so did the president. Jackson visited the Oval Office nearly a dozen times, and the meetings between him and Clinton were as delicate and stylized as the mating of cranes. Jackson never mentioned his plans for the presidency and neither did Clinton. "But he knew we read the newspapers," Ickes said. "We knew what he was saying."

In the summer of 1995, when Clinton was deliberating his position on affirmative action, he made a point of calling Jackson to consult. "Did Jackson influence the president on affirmative action?" Ickes said. "Yes. How much, I can't tell you. It was way too subtle and much too profound." Well, perhaps not that subtle. "We should have a simple slogan," Clinton said on July 19, 1995. "Mend it, but don't end it." Which did not sound a great deal like Bill Clinton. In fact, it sounded distinctly Jacksonian. Did Jackson author the line? "It could well be," Ickes said. "It certainly *sounds* like Jesse."

CHRISTMAS CAME EARLY BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

At only one point during the long negotiations did Jackson overreach: he asked to participate in the prep sessions for Clinton's two presidential debates. His request was refused. The White House had its priorities: Jackson might be allowed to affect presidential policy, but not presidential stagecraft.

In the fall of 1995, just about the time when Jackson would have to make his final decision whether to get into the race, Clinton got a really lucky break: Mel Reynolds was sent to prison. Reynolds, a then 43-year-old congressman representing the South Side and south suburbs of Chicago, was convicted of having sex with a 16-year-old campaign worker and obstructing the subsequent investigation. He resigned on October 1. Jesse Jackson Jr., the 31-year-old eldest son of Jesse Jackson, decided he wanted the job.

The White House seized upon the opportunity immediately. Jackson's pride in his children is enormous. He would likely be grateful for any help offered his son. There was much the White House could do. Perhaps Jesse Jr. would like a campaign visit by the vice president? It was arranged. And then there was the matter of money. What campaign couldn't use money?

Asked what money may have been offered to Jesse Jr., Ickes replied carefully: "Certain Democratic fund-raisers close to the president gave money to the Jackson for Congress campaign." Indeed. Two contributions stand out: A $3,000 contribution from the Lippo Group and $1,000 each from Soroya and Arief Wiriadinata, whose $450,000



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

contribution to the Democratic National Committee was returned when the couple went back to Indonesia.

Jesse Jackson Sr. decided not to run for president in 1996. Jesse Jackson Jr. was elected to Congress. And his swearing-in might have marked the first time in history words failed his father. Attempting to describe to Laura Blumenfeld of *The Washington Post* just how much pride he felt, Jesse Sr. became almost incoherent with joy. "Like, I feel elephant joy," he said. "Or dinosaur excitement."

At Clinton's inaugural, Jackson was given a starring role. He was center stage at the prayer service and accorded a prize aisle seat on the platform behind Clinton, which meant the president could stop and shake his hand on the way out. Jackson's daughter Santita sang the National Anthem to close the ceremony.

Alexis Herman, who had spent so much time working with Jackson, was rewarded, too. With Jackson lobbying in her favor, she beat out Harris Wofford, a former senator from Pennsylvania, to become Clinton's choice for Secretary of Labor. "Alexis worked very hard with Jackson," a senior White House official said. "Her being [nominated] as Secretary of Labor has something to do with that."

Still, all this wasn't that great a pay-off. Jesse Jackson still wants to be somebody and, specifically, somebody in the second Clinton administration. "There was some serious discussion with Jackson right after the election," a White House source said. While rumors circulated a few weeks ago that Jackson was being considered as a special envoy to Africa, the White House is now throwing cold water on that. "It's not special envoy and it's not ambassador-at-large," a senior White House official said. "But discussions are underway with him." Jackson has made it known what kind of job he wants. "Jackson always resented Bill Richardson's troubleshooter role for Clinton," a White House source said. "He wanted it for himself." Richardson, a Democratic congressman from New Mexico who was recently nominated to be U.S. ambassador to the U.N., has been an unofficial troubleshooter for Clinton for the last few years, negotiating the release of prisoners from North Korea, Cuba, the Sudan and Iraq. It is the kind of crisis-oriented, high-visibility role that Jackson would relish.

With the forced departure of Ickes from the administration, the Jackson portfolio reportedly goes to Al Gore, who has a warm personal relationship with Jackson. But it could well be a full-time job. If anyone thought Jackson was going to wait quietly for his reward, they were reminded recently of the publicity he can generate. *Time* magazine reported that Jackson was unhappy with the Clinton administration and was considering a run for the presidency in the next election. "I've never seen him so serious so soon about running," a source told *Time* (apparently with a straight face).

Though Jackson quickly denied the report, the wake-up call had been delivered. So now Jackson waits and keeps hope alive. He expects to hear from the White House just as soon as the political operatives there start thinking about how much Al Gore would like to avoid a primary in 2000. •

**The road from Aberdeen.**

# SEX AND THE SOLDIER

*By Stephanie Gutmann*

February 4, 1997, and an all-too-familiar looking headline—"TOP ENLISTED MAN IN THE ARMY STANDS ACCUSED OF SEX ASSAULT"—occupies a prime corner of the front page of *The New York Times*. Just a few weeks earlier, the papers had been reporting charges of inappropriate hazing of female cadets at the Citadel. And just a few months before that, several female recruits at the Army's Aberdeen Proving Ground had accused drill instructors of rape and sexual harassment, unleashing a torrent of similar accusations from female soldiers around the country. In this latest case, as in so many of the others, blame will be difficult to affix.

STEPHANIE GUTMANN is a writer living in New York.

Once more it will come down to "he said, she said." Once more there will be op-eds, hand-wringing and counselors; once more the Army will have to deploy its investigatory troops. This, just as the Army digs out from Aberdeen—where there are still over 200 criminal charges to investigate, and a hot-line brings in new complaints every day.

What no one is publicly saying (but what everyone in the military knows) is that incidents like these are bound to recur. In a military that is dedicated to the full integration of women, and to papering over the implications of that integration as best it can, sex and sexual difference will continue to be a disruptive force. And regulating sex will become an ever more important mil-



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

itary sideline, one whose full costs in money, labor and morale we will not really know until the forces are called on to do what they are assembled to do: fight.

The military's sex problems begin with the simple anatomical differences between men and women. Racial integration, to which the integration of women is ceaselessly compared, took the military about a century to achieve (quite successfully in the end) and that involved differences that are only skin deep. An effective fighting force depends on a steady supply of known quantities; it needs "units" made up of interchangeable elements called soldiers. Once one got over skin color, racial integration was still about integrating the same body.

But what happens when you try to absorb a population that is not, in unit terms, interchangeable? What happens when you try to integrate into a cohesive whole two populations with radically different bodies? In the elemental, unremittingly physical world of the soldier, sex differences—masked by technology in the civilian world—stand out in high relief. Consider the female soldier not in political terms, but in the real, inescapable terms of physical structure. She is, on average, about five inches shorter than the male soldier, has half the upper body strength, lower aerobic capacity and 37 percent less muscle mass. She has a lighter skeleton, which may mean, for instance, that she won't be able to "pull G forces" as reliably in a fighter plane. She cannot pee standing up, a problem that may seem trivial, but whose impact on long marches was the subject of an entire Army research study; under investigation was a device called the "Freshette Complete System," which would allow women to pee standing up in places where foliage doesn't supply ample cover. She tends, particularly if she is under the age of 30 (as are 60 percent of military personnel) to get pregnant.

One would expect that such a sweeping social experiment (and one so expensive—just refitting the *U.S.S. Eisenhower* to accommodate 400 new female sailors cost $1 million, for example) would hit some rough patches. But don't expect to hear about them from the military brass. Afflicted by a kind of "Vietnam syndrome" about the possibility of winning an ideological battle against the civilians who increasingly influence military policy, the brass now seem mostly concerned with trying to prove how well, as one officer put it, they "get it" where women are concerned. This week, when Army Chief of Staff General Dennis J. Reimer said he thought the service should re-examine whether the advantages of jointly training men and women outweigh the drawbacks, it was something of a bombshell. In general, the military has maintained a virtual silence about problems with the new influx of female soldiers, and, in the ranks, negative comments about integration are considered "career killers." Those who don't "get it" talk about it in the barracks and on the Internet, which has become a haven for military samizdat about sex and other dicey matters. As one soldier wrote in a typical online exchange, "examples of these latest 'revelations' [about sex between subordinates and their immediate superiors] are known to nearly everyone who has served. But we were never allowed to discuss ... our concerns openly because it would raise issues about the efficacy of mixing girls and boys and that was politically incorrect, a career-ending taboo."

In general, the military's response to the problems of gender integration has been to recruit more women. The more women, the more feminized the culture, the fewer problems with sex, goes the thinking. (One corollary of this may be the recent decline in male enlistment. In focus groups, young men tend to cite, among other reasons for not joining up, fear of purges like the one after Tailhook and the increased presence of females in the ranks.)

The big recruitment drive has brought the percentage of women in the force to 14 percent, which may not seem like much but is up from 2 percent at the close of the Vietnam War. Women now make up 20 percent of new recruits—compared to 12 percent a decade ago. And the effort to recruit still more women is relentless. In 1991, when the Marines replaced their slogan "A FEW GOOD MEN" with "THE FEW, THE PROUD, THE MARINES," the idea was to sound more female-friendly. Nowadays, much of a military recruiter's time is consumed with trying to cajole women to enlist. And in practice, unfortunately, this often means adapting—which is to say, lowering—standards without exactly admitting to doing so.

The goal for a young Marine recruiter named C.J. Chivers, for example, became just "'Get 'em on the plane.' If there were any problems, boot camp could sort it out." Chivers, whose stint as a recruiter lasted from 1992-94, adds that "invariably we would fill up the white male quotas almost immediately. So it became any woman that came in there that met the minimums, we gotta hire. What that did was take all the subjectivity out of it, an enormous part of the evaluation process. I couldn't say 'I got a bad vibe' the way I could with a guy." A recruiter also had to work hard to maintain what Chivers calls an "informal double standard" on strength differences: "Invariably the guys went down to Officer Candidate School with a near-perfect physical score while the women just cleared the minimum"—even using what military brass call "gender-normed" test results and "dual," i.e. lower, standards: for example, in the Marines, fitness for women is tested with a flexed arm hang instead of pull-ups, half the number of sit-ups and a slower run.

Women have also been lured into the service with the promise of a more important role. Since 1994 more than 80,000 new jobs have been opened in positions that were formerly off-limits. Rescinding the combat exclusion law and the risk rule has allowed women to qualify to fly combat planes and to serve on combat ships. Women are still not allowed to serve on submarines, but *Navy Times* reports that "a review underway to examine future submarine designs may include a study on including women crew members."

And ever since the Gulf war, when women served in combat support roles, the possibility of taking that last step—of knocking down barriers to the infantry—has



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

been very much in the air. Ground combat, considered the most potentially brutal, the most physically demanding and certainly the grubbiest form of combat, is seen as a crucial piece of turf by the Old Guard and plenty of the young old guard, too. Opponents of integrating ground combat tend to argue that mixed-sex units won't achieve the right kind of "cohesion," that women on the whole aren't strong enough to, say, effectively lob grenades or load tanks, and that there is, at bottom, something repugnant about a male officer ordering women barely out of their teens into harm's way. The opposing argument has been pointedly made by N.O.W. President Patricia Ireland, who maintains that exclusion promotes the view that women are weak, inferior and in need of protection. (With Patricia Schroeder, the great pro-combat warrior, in retirement, the next pro-combat push may come from a commission appointed by Army Secretary Togo D. West Jr. after the rape charges surfaced at Aberdeen. The commission's official mandate is to look at causes of sexual harassment, but the many pro-women-in-combat appointees are expected to argue the familiar exclusion-equals-lower-status-equals-harassment line when they make their recommendations.)

To understand why gender integration became such an unquestionable in the military culture, we have to return to 1992, the year of the Clarence Thomas hearings, the trial of Mike Tyson, "They Just Don't Get It"—and the Tailhook investigations. Tailhook was officially declared a symptom of a larger problem—not an isolated event involving at most about six men—when investigators were ordered to scrutinize the "cultural" context. Through the prism of Tailhook and of sexual harassment, the culture that had long prepared men for battle suddenly looked, as then-acting Navy Secretary J. Daniel Howard put it, "diseased and decaying." "What happened at Tailhook," he told reporters, "was not just a problem with the integration of men and women in our ranks. It was just as much a problem with the toleration of Stone Age attitudes about warriors returning from the sea. . . . "

Somewhere in the committees and hearings charged with studying this "cultural problem" a remedy swam into focus: men harassed women because they did not see them as equals. If women were brought in in great numbers, "the warrior culture" would be diluted. After Tailhook, the military made recruitment of women a top priority; barriers toppled, policies changed, promotions were spirited through the pipelines.

The new thinking also held that, if you got to them early enough, all kinds of "sexist attitudes" could be nipped in the bud. And early enough meant starting with boot camp. Enter Gender Integrated Basic Training. In 1992 the Navy began training all new female recruits at one of three integrated boot camps—a way, as Captain Kathleen Bruyere put it, to give recruits "a chance to make mistakes, say stupid things, and tell them we don't do that here." At Bruyere's camp in Orlando, Florida, recruits did "everything but sleep together in the same compartment"—including physical training and bunk and dress inspections. They also spent a good deal of time watching films about sexual harassment, while questionnaires like the one that stated "The Navy is a man's world. True? or False?" gave the new troops ample opportunity to "say stupid things."

By the end of 1993, and into 1994, the Army followed suit with its own gender-integrated training. The Army may have been slower on the uptake because it had already experimented with the process in the early '80s and found that when the sexes, say, ran obstacle courses together, the women tended to have a high injury rate from trying to keep up, and the men complained that they weren't challenged.

To avoid dealing with the problems posed by differences in physical strength between men and women, the proponents of sexual integration have increasingly favored a movement to "re-evaluate" the way soldiers are trained. As Barbara Pope, then assistant secretary of the Navy for manpower and reserve affairs, put it in the early '90s, "We are in the process of weeding out the white male as norm. We're about changing the culture." And so, in some boot camps, the fundamental character of training is changing. Fort Jackson, the camp where gender-integrated training was thought to have failed in the early '80s, began to evaluate "soldierization skills" by putting more emphasis on skills like "map-making and first aid" at which female recruits excel. The result has been a kind of feel-good feminization of boot camp culture, with the old (male) ethos of competition and survival giving at least partial way to a new (female) spirit of cooperation and esteem-building.

At the instigation of a Navy weekly called *Soundings*, a group of middle-aged officers revisited their old basic training camp last fall to see how "the kinder, gentler Navy" was doing things. The oldsters were greeted by a commander—one Captain Cornelia de Groot Whitehead—who used her opening briefing to inform them that 40 percent of new recruits have at some time been victims of serious physical or sexual abuse, while 26 percent have contemplated suicide. Accordingly, de Groot Whitehead said, "We've decided we needed to do something different." The tourists from the "Old Navy" were bemused to learn that the infamous obstacle course of yore had been renamed the "confidence course" and moved indoors to comprise "an indoor labyrinth of pipes to crawl through, monkey bars to swing from, ladders to climb up and balance beams to sidestep over."

And at Fort Jackson, South Carolina—where, in 1995, boys and girls shared barracks—an *Army Times* reporter recently found that grunts no longer have to do push-ups to a count. Instead, they are asked to perform "a timed exercise in which soldiers do the best they can in a set period." One drill instructor has solved the male/female strength discrepancy problem by putting young recruits in "ability groups" for their morning run. "You're not competing with the rest of the company," Colonel Byron D. Greene, the director of Plans, Training and Mobilization, told *Army Times*. "You are competing against yourself and your own abilities."



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

But life—especially military life—does not ignore physical differences. When young soldiers leave training, they are assigned jobs (called Military Occupational Specialities or MOSs), and the physical requirements of these jobs are not nearly as forgiving as a "New Army" drill instructor. A typical Army MOS, the kind of combat support MOS a young woman might request, could involve lots of lifting and loading, of shell casings, for instance. Pat Schroeder can say what she likes, but "a shell casing," groused an Army physiologist, "is always gonna weigh ninety pounds. There's nothing we can do about that."

Female soldiers themselves know this. A 1987 Army Research Institute survey found that women are more likely than men to report that insufficient upper body strength interferes with their job performance. Twenty-six percent of female light wheel vehicle mechanics, for example, said they found it "very difficult" to do their job, as opposed to 9 percent of the men in that specialty who were polled.

And, according to Army physiologist Everett Harman, "[Command Reports] have indicated that many soldiers are not physically capable of meeting the demands of their military occupational specialities. Unfortunately women fall disproportionately into this category." Attrition is particularly high, Harman said, in "heavy" (requiring 100-pound lifting) and "very heavy" (over 100 pounds) MOSs like Food Service Specialist, Motor Transport Operator and Unit Supply Specialist. Retraining and reassigning a soldier has been estimated to cost about $16,000, but advising a female soldier that she may have trouble with an MOS she is considering is, sources say, one of those "career-killing" statements that bureaucratically wise officers have learned to avoid.

There have been two attempts made in the past fifteen years to establish "gender-neutral" strength standards and a qualifying pre-test for each MOS, but as *Army Times* reported, "on both occasions, the requirements were eventually abandoned when studies showed most women couldn't meet the standards proposed for nearly 70 percent of the Army specialities." In 1995, a group of military researchers were set to try again, but this time the project didn't even reach the partial implementation stage because funding was denied. Funding was also recently denied to Harman, who had applied for a grant to do a second study of "remedial strength training for women," after his first had shown promising results. Harman believes the brass do not like his approach because it admits that female soldiers are not strong enough to perform basic military tasks, which is contrary to the military's line. "At the highest level, I think they feel that if we show that women can get stronger, then the onus would be on the women to get stronger," he says, "while it is the jobs that should be made easier."

But can the jobs be made easier? Can weapons get lighter (as some advisers are urging)—without reducing lethality? Proponents of the change-the-equipment-not-the-people view point to the highly automated Air Force. But the Air Force is not the Army, and it is not the Marines. "If you have a plane sitting on the runway and you have to load it with supplies—bombs, whatever, you can have machines that drive out there, that raise the stuff on a little elevator," Harman points out. "But out in the woods and fields a lot has to get done by hand. Even in the kitchen there are big pots weighing about 100 pounds or so. It would take a tremendous amount of research to make certain jobs lighter, because you're talking about re-engineering the whole thing. Carrying a tool box, changing a truck tire; there are certain jobs, for instance, where you have to carry a toolbox that might weigh a few hundred pounds and put it up on the wing of a plane."

Online, where military folk often say impolitic things, there is a sense of foreboding about the danger of ignoring the strength issue: "Nothing is more demoralizing," wrote one Marine, "than to have to turn your formation around to go pick up the females. This is only training. I can even put the females on remedial training and they still hold up my formations. I would hate to see how many Marines I would lose if we were in combat and had to be somewhere fast."

There is one respect, though, in which the stubborn physical realities of integrating women cannot be easily denied—and that is their capacity for childbearing. A recent article in *Stars and Stripes* reported that a woman had to be evacuated for pregnancy approximately every three days in the Bosnian theater from December 20, 1995, when the deployment began, until July 19, 1996. Army public relations people in Bosnia don't dispute that claim, but they also say pregnancy is no particular problem for the Army, "no different than appendicitis."

It is clearly not a problem anymore in a career sense. All branches and some of the service academies have softened policies on pregnancies and made it clear that their official stance is now completely accepting. Unfurling one such policy in February, 1995, Navy Secretary John H. Dalton told reporters that "Navy leadership recognize that pregnancy is a natural event that can occur in the lives of Navy servicewomen ... and is not a presumption of medical incapacity." The Army has followed suit, stating that "Pregnancy does not normally adversely affect the career of a soldier."

In fact, pregnancy is now so "non-adverse" that soldiers say it's sometimes used to get out of "hell tours" like Bosnia, to go home. "I know other females that have done things ... probably to get out of going somewhere," Specialist Carrie Lambertus told *Army Times*. "It happens all the time."

A woman who turns up pregnant in Bosnia is shipped in short order to the U.S. or Germany. Then, according to an Army spokesman, "female soldiers have the option of either staying on active duty or applying for release [with an honorable discharge] from active duty." Those who decide to stay in the military get six weeks maternity leave. The new Navy policy also provides for help in locating a runaway dad and in establishing paternity.

In the Navy, pregnancy rates run about 8 percent of the force at any given time. A pregnant woman is al-



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lowed to stay onboard ship up to her fifth month; then she gets reassigned to shore duty to avoid the heavy lifting that is a sailor's lot, not to mention the hazardous chemicals in engine rooms. Of the 400 women on the first gender-integrated warship, the *U.S.S. Eisenhower*, twenty-four were "non-deployable" due to pregnancy at the start of a Persian Gulf tour and another fifteen were evacuated once on the water. On the *U.S.S. Acadia*—dubbed "the Love Boat" by the press—thirty-six out of a total 360 female sailors aboard had to be evacuated during a Gulf tour.

And no matter how determinedly the military defines pregnancy as a non-issue, the facts of pregnancy cannot be altered. A pregnant soldier is—or soon will be—a non-deployable soldier. A General Accounting Office study of soldiers called up to go to the Persian Gulf showed that women were four times more non-deployable than men—because of the pregnancy and recovery numbers. As Lambertus puts it, "If you're in a platoon where they're moving equipment or digging, setting up tents, [pregnant soldiers] are not going to be doing anything, except maybe sitting there and answering the phone all day. That really does cause some resentment." If her commanders had wanted to make sure the unit was truly deployable "they'll have to reclassify me and send me somewhere else, which would take more money, more time. So actually, it would be cheaper for them just to wait and keep me [here]."

Then there is the matter of how one gets pregnant in the first place—the matter of what happens when you take men and women, aged on average 18 to 25, away from what are generally small-town homes, ship them to exotic ports of call, house them in the catacomb-like berthing areas of ships, in coed tents or in crowded barracks and then subject them to loneliness, boredom and high stress. The fantasy of civilian activists like Pat Schroeder is that the result will look something like the bustling, efficient bridge of the *Starship Enterprise*. The reality is apt to look more like "a big high school"—which is the way a sailor named Elizabeth Rugh described her ship, the newly integrated *U.S.S. Samuel Gompers*.

Troops in Bosnia and Herzegovina (there were 1,500 female troops in the first deployment) generally live in coed tents with eight to ten people. Ranks are mixed, privates bedded down next to superiors. Troops are not allowed to drink alcohol or eat in restaurants, but they *are* allowed to have sex—as long as they are single and not doing it with a subordinate (or superior) in their chain of command. In a solemn statement provided to *Stars and Stripes*, Army spokesman Captain Ken Clifton wrote that "the Army does not prohibit heterosexual relations among consenting single soldiers ... but it does not provide facilities for sexual relations."

Lack of official facilities does not seem to be a great obstacle. "Where there's a will there's a way!" Captain Chris Scholl told *Stars and Stripes*. Favorite locations, he said, include the backs of Humvees parked on a deserted air strip, tents, latrines, even underground bunkers—if you can hack standing up to your ankles in icy water. "It's going on all over the place," said Scholl. "They've locked us down so what else is there to do?"

And there is, of course, the problem of nonconsensual sex. A Defense Department spokesman says "there is no way to get a good number" on the frequency of rapes and sexual assaults in the armed forces, because each service keeps its own numbers and defines things slightly differently. Still, it is clear that the Aberdeen case was not an isolated incident. The Army recorded twenty-four incidents it categorized as "sexual assaults" involving U.S. soldiers in the Gulf war; these cases range from that of a 24-year-old specialist who had been on overnight guard duty in the desert with a male soldier and awoke to find him fondling her under the blanket they had shared for warmth to that of a 21-year-old private who was raped at knifepoint by a sergeant.

The making of a soldier is a rough, hands-on, invasive process—a preparation for what may be a very rough end. "[T]he training, the discipline, the daily humiliations, the privileges of 'brutish' sergeants, the living en masse like schools of fish," wrote James Jones in his essay "The Evolution of a Soldier," "are all directed toward breaking down the sense of sanctity of the physical person, and toward hardening the awareness that a soldier is the chattel (hopefully the proud chattel but a chattel all the same) of the society he serves."

Soldiers abuse each other—in training, in command, in hazing rituals. It is a self-regulating mechanism; finding the weak links, then shaming them or bullying them to come up to par, is one way a unit ensures, or tries to ensure, its own survival, since on the battlefield one's life depends on one's buddies' performance.

Meanwhile, the brass attempt to operate on both tracks, to honor the standards of both the civilian and the military world. They know they must encourage "cohesion" in their mixed-gender units, but they know, too, that they must avoid the wrong kind of cohesion—the kind that could stimulate jealousies, lovers' spats and ... babies. So they end up sending a rather scrambled message, something like "Women are different but they're not different"; "We have the same expectations for women but you cannot treat them the same."

"Cry havoc and let slip the dogs of war," roared Shakespeare's Marc Antony. Something tells me he wasn't talking about 19-year-old girls. "Let the dogs loose," read a piece of locker-room samizdat (observed by writer Kathy Dobie) at a coed basic training program in Florida. Men ache to unleash their dogs of war. Women generally have to be exhorted or trained to—then, good students and employees that they are, they can probably manage a semblance of dogginess at least for a while. But do we really want them to? Can a man of say, 35, be trained not to stay his hand when he needs to send a 20-year-old girl onto a mortar-strafed field? Can the impulse which, still, impels men to try to protect women be overridden? Do we want it to be? Won't sex always gum up the works? Would we really prefer if it didn't? •



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# THE HARD QUESTIONS

## Civil rites

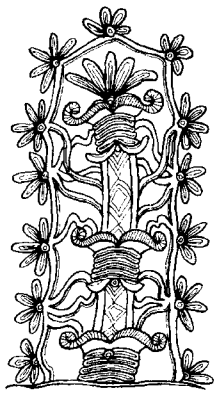
What does Oklahoma City signify? Increasingly, we are asked to connect the horrible crime committed in that city with America's "culture wars"—a characterization to be resisted because war is what one does with enemies; politics is what one does with opponents. This is not to say democratic politics will not be rowdy. Frederick Douglass proclaimed that those who want their politics polite "want rain without thunder and lightning." And there are difficult distinctions to be made. For instance, is peaceful lawbreaking in the name of a higher law a legitimate form of democratic conversation? Regardless of one's view of militant argument and nonviolent disobedience, though, they in no way lead to Oklahoma City.

But there are pundits who think otherwise. When criminals bomb a clinic, nonviolent pro-life protesters who operate well within the bounds of tough political debate find themselves under pressure to explain why their advocacy isn't a goad to bomb-making. Indeed, Richard Cohen, writing in *The Washington Post* last month under the headline: "WHEN MORALITY BEGETS VIOLENCE," asks us to collapse the distinction between advocacy and violence, and he does so, in part, by wildly exaggerating the threat to clinics. He writes: "Wherever there is a connection to abortion, there is always the possibility of violence."

But if you look at the thousands of family planning and abortion clinics in America and then at the incidence of violence, you readily discern that the possibility is remote and, according to the most recent available figures, actually declining. Any violence, of course, is unacceptable. But why up the ante? Why distort the dangers? I suspect it is to stymie or silence the other side. I'm old enough to remember the early days of the civil rights movement, and the canard that civil rights protesters were inciting people to riot, promoting chaos, justifying violence. Civil rights protesters were told that their rhetoric itself constituted violence because it cast fear into the hearts of defenders of segregation. It set neighbor against neighbor and roiled the once-smooth waters.

So it became necessary to tar everyone with the same brush. Consider Cohen: "The language of the anti-abortion movement, a piece of it anyway, is just plain ugly in its implications." I agree that *a piece*—the notion that killing an abortionist is justified—is ugly. But that isn't how he starts. He starts with "The language of the anti-abortion movement . . . " and that is what lingers in the mind. The caveat follows; it does not lead.

Cohen is also agitated by the recent *First Things* contretemps and the call, on the part of some contributors to the symposium, for a bare-knuckles "church-state" debate leading to possible civil disobedience. Some participants in the symposium did indeed argue for civil disobedience. For others, debate had not yet been exhausted. A sturdy democratic society accommodates such contestations; indeed, given the undeniable moral basis of democracy, it virtually guarantees that such conflicts will emerge. The urgent call for a more decisive church-state showdown on constitutional and ethical grounds is not, as Cohen insists, a "chilling" prospect. To label it as such is to desire political speech itself chilled, so long as those put in the political deep freeze are not those whose views one shares.



Cohen fails to appreciate that central to church-state debate from the inception of those two categories was the question of obedience. This is not some sinister concept newly invented by warped radicals convinced that the judiciary has usurped the traditional and appropriate role of the legislative branches of government. No, the somewhat misnamed church-state debate has from the beginning involved certain perduring political and ethical questions: Who is one obliged to obey and why? What if the dictates of a government and the dictates of a faith conflict? Indeed, Jean-Jacques Rousseau opined that Christianity was a terrible religion because it put people in conflict with themselves. But that is what a religion seriously professed should do: it wouldn't be much of a religion if it didn't. Religious people ought to be torn. Should I fight in this war or not? Am I obliged to obey a law I consider unjust or not?

To declaim that fundamental public disaffection from the current juridical order is an open invitation—"in between the lines or in boldface"—to illegal acts that include violent assaults on persons or property or both, is unfair. "Bombs go off, people die, and zealots set the terms of debate," Cohen writes. But zealots have *not* been setting the terms of debate in recent years. Zealots have been repudiated publicly by the overwhelming majority of pro-life advocates over and over and over again. Does one tell Frederick Douglass to shut up because John Brown is a zealot? Many did. They were wrong then just as Cohen is wrong now.

When we frighten ourselves about the outcomes of tough democratic debate, we lose a sense of balance and proportion. We think that the extreme articulation of a position is the truth of the position unadorned. And the unadorned truth is a bomb. It is Oklahoma City. In the current debate about civility, Oklahoma City recurs again and again as a leitmotif. But you cannot put civility at one end of the spectrum and incivility at the other and then replay the federal building blowing up as the inescapable culmination of that incivility. Blowing up a building and killing men, women and children—one's fellow citizens—is not an act of incivility. It is an act of criminality. It is not an extreme form of political argument. It is an anti-political act that kills argument.

Decades ago, Hannah Arendt tried to distinguish between violence and power. Arendt criticized thinkers of the left and right who held that "violence is nothing more than the most flagrant manifestation of power." This, she insisted, is a fundamental error. For violence is a crude instrumentality. Power, by contrast, speaks to our human ability to act in concert, to begin anew, to keep hope and action alive. Only if we bear this distinction in mind can we resist the reduction of politics to who has the bigger bombs; to who has the means to coerce and terrorize whom. To be "uncivil" is to refuse to engage; to walk away. Criminals are not uncivil. Citizens—those who are civil—clash and contest within a public space that every participant in the debate has a stake in upholding. When someone argues for civil disobedience both words must be kept in mind. It is disobedience. But it is civil; it helps to uphold and to challenge civic life. Oklahoma City isn't about incivility. It is about killing. The best way to honor the victims of that terrible crime is to cease and desist the facile deployment of "Oklahoma City" as an all-purpose club to discredit one's opponents as terrorists or the coddlers of terrorists.

**JEAN BETHKE ELSHTAIN**



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# BOOKS & The Arts

## *Stanley Kauffmann on Films*

### Mountaineers, Miners

In his later life Tolstoi thought all his fiction was bad except for two stories. One of them—recently filmed—was "A Prisoner of the Caucasus." (The other was "God Sees the Truth But Waits," quite different in subject but similar in theme: enlightenment through captivity.) Well, it's no news that artists are not always the best judges of their work. Not many Tolstoians—a group that, I assume, includes every literate person on earth—would agree with the author. Think of "Master and Man" and "Hadji Murad," to speak only of his short pieces. One more oblique hint that Tolstoi's judgment is questionable is that the Russian film made from the Caucasus story is in some ways more effective than the original so prized by him.

**Prisoner of the Mountains** (Orion Classics) was adapted for the screen by the film's director, Sergei Bodrov, along with Arif Aliev and Boris Giller. Disregarding Tolstoi's subtitle, "A True Story," they have transposed the action from the Chechnya of 150 years ago, where Tolstoi did some of his army service, and have placed it in that general area today—or at least as it was before the recent Russian withdrawal. In this (unspecified) area the Russian army is simultaneously governing and fighting the Muslim population.

The screenplay demotes the central character, Vania, from officer to private and changes his companion from a stout dullish officer to a clever sergeant, deft and reckless. The two soldiers are captured in an ambush by raiding mountaineers. (Another change, for film convenience: these mountaineers speak Russian instead of their own language.) Their captor, Abdul, is a fiftyish man, stern and proud, who doesn't kill his two Russian prisoners only because he hopes to exchange them for his son, a prisoner of the Russians. But the gist of the story is the sympathy that arises between Vania and Abdul's 13-year-old daughter, Dina. Every day Dina brings the Russians their rations and is childishly, reticently, fascinated by Vania. He, for his part, is touched to delicacies of feeling that affect the outcome of the story.

This Dina-Vania bond, the relations between the two Russian prisoners, the moves by Abdul toward his son's release and by the two Russians toward saving their skins, are all developed more fully than in the original version. The screenplay doesn't windily inflate Tolstoi's economy, for which his short fiction is celebrated; but the drama is more fully articulated—not least the Dina-Vania connection. These two are enemies, a fact that is never completely lost; yet, before long, he is whittling toys for her and she is wearing her best necklace when she brings the food. Nothing is forced: everything grows.

Bodrov, now 49, has long been active in Soviet and Russian film, though I've never before seen anything of his. He made *Prisoner* in Dagestan, which is not far from Chechnya, mostly in a mountain village that is much the way it was a thousand years ago (except for Mozart and Louis Armstrong on the radio). And Bodrov deploys the huge gaunt mountains to make his film's title genuinely frightening.

Bodrov also uses the human scenery, so to speak. The faces. The people who live, like their ancestors for long generations, in this isolated, stubborn, struggling region. Dina is played by one of them—Susanna Mekhralieva, a schoolchild whom Bodrov found in the area, then gentled into a good performance. Almost all the smaller roles and certainly all the crowds are local people, who provide something more than verity. These are faces that were there before the czars and after, that survived the seventy years of the New Order. Thus, visually, Bodrov underscores his film with history.

The debonair sergeant is played by Oleg Menshikov, who was in *Burnt by the Sun*, and who has some of the flair of Errol Flynn. The bumbling but forthright Vania is played by the director's son, Sergei Bodrov, in his screen debut. He is no bolt of histrionic lightning, but he is earnest; and his father proves with him, as with Dina, that he can get likable work from beginners.

The screenplay adds a few supernatural touches that are, oddly, more amusing than intrusive. Bodrov's entire film is, to put it musically, like a set of appealing variations on an old, simpler theme.

Actors like to act. After this explosive insight, I add that sometimes good actors choose material by the role rather than by the whole. Recently we had *Losing Chase*, a vapid TV drama in which, pre-

### FILMS WORTH SEEING

**Everyone Says I Love You.** *Woody Allen's musical blends 1990s plots with songs from the 1930s. Much charm and tickle, except for Allen's own performance. (Reviewed 11/11/96)* **Hamlet.** *Forceful, engaging, sometimes immense. Kenneth Branagh performs well in a cast that generally performs better. His directing can be intrusive but is always fluent. (1/27/97)* **Some Mother's Son.** *Northern Ireland, the hunger strike of 1981. Helen Mirren and Fionnula Flanagan are legitimately moving, not facile or cheap, as the mothers of two of the prisoners. (12/30/96)* **Troublesome Creek: A Midwestern.** *An engrossing documentary, by Jeanne Jordan and Steven Ascher, about Jordan's family—longtime farmers in Iowa—as farming circumstances change. Humane Americana. (2/17/97)*—**SK**



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sumably, Helen Mirren and Kyra Sedgwick appeared because they had attractive roles. Both women were excellent, but it was like excellent ice sculpture: any warmth of inquiry by us made it all melt into slush.

Now we have **Margaret's Museum** (Cinepix), another TV drama with savory acting parts and not much else. Yet those parts drew some exceptionally good actors, and it would be a shame to ignore their work.

The setting is a coal-mining town in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, in the late 1940s. The screenplay, by Gerald Wexler and the director, Mort Ransen, is derived from stories by Sheldon Curie; and it begins by showing us a lonely house called Margaret's Museum. We are also shown that something macabre is within, which frightens off visitors. After this brief prologue in the "present," we go back to find out why the museum was founded and what it holds.

At the beginning, Margaret is a somewhat weird young woman, poor, who lives with her worn mother, Catherine, and her young brother. Margaret's father and older brother were killed in the mines. A young man, recently fired from the mines, turns up—one of those tall, high-spirited young men, dashing and free, whose natural habitat is fiction. This one, Neil, plays the fiddle and speaks Gaelic, which is still a prevalent language in the town. He is taken with Margaret, and eventually she responds. They marry, despite Catherine's doomsaying. Neil loses his dishwashing job in town and, for lack of other chances, applies again to the mine and is hired back. In time, a mining accident hits Neil and her younger brother, and Margaret, now not quite right in the head, opens her museum, with some grim souvenirs. Which we never actually see.

Reminders of other films set in mining towns—*How Green Was My Valley*, *The Stars Look Down*, many others—are unavoidable. (There are also reminders in Margaret of the daft young woman in *Breaking the Waves*.) The picture does little to compensate for the familiar: we just move through it all to the foreseeable end. Worse: even the bizarrerie of the museum can be foretold. The course of the film is essentially like one long echo, with a strain for eccentric surprise at the end.

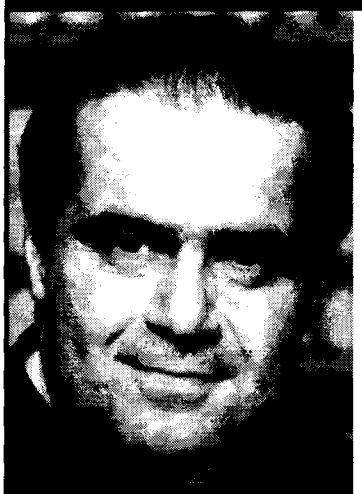
Yet Ransen has directed vividly and has cast the film very well. Margaret is Helena Bonham Carter, who was recently admirable in *Twelfth Night* as the elegantly bereaved Olivia. Here she reveals a quite different power. Obviously she looks and moves differently, and she has mastered the Nova Scotian accent; but her real achievement is in finding the mercurial center of this strange


# A Matter of Interpretation

## Federal Courts and the Law

## Antonin Scalia

*Edited by Amy Gutmann*



In this incisive new book, Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia shares his opinions about the law in general and the role of judges in particular. In his unique style, both erudite and witty, he exhorts judges to resist the temptation to rely on the intent and history of legislation in making decisions. Instead, he argues, they should give up trying to understand what lawmakers meant and focus on what they actually wrote into law.

*A Matter of Interpretation* includes responses from four writers with differing points of view: Gordon Wood, Laurence Tribe, Mary Ann Glendon, and Ronald Dworkin. In the spirit of debate, Justice Scalia responds to these critics.

This is an unusual and compelling book. It offers the rare opportunity of witnessing a sitting Supreme Court Justice in dialogue with some of the best legal minds of our time.

*The Princeton University Center for Human Values Series*

Cloth: $19.95 ISBN 0-691-02630-0

**Princeton University Press**

AVAILABLE AT FINE BOOKSTORES OR DIRECTLY FROM THE PUBLISHER: 800-777-4726

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: PUP.PRINCETON.EDU



## Like what you're reading?

**The New Republic**

is just one of the more than 2,000 great titles you can find—for free!—on the Electronic Newsstand.

✳

**Come browse the Newsstand at http://www.enews.com/**

✳ **The Electronic Newsstand is the Ultimate Magazine Site.** ✳




LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

young woman.

Kate Nelligan, as the hard-bitten Catherine, is just as fine, creating a dour woman who is the product of her life. Clive Russell, as Neil, succeeds in a character that could easily be a pain but is here a pleasure.

Also in the cast is an insufficiently praised actor, Kenneth Welsh, Canadian by birth, American in much of his work. I first became aware of him fourteen years ago in a New York café reading of Howard Brenton's powerful play *Sore Throats.* Welsh was resoundingly true, and has been so whenever I've seen him since. Here he plays Margaret's miner uncle without fuss but with freshness. In a key scene the uncle has to convey tacitly to Margaret the news of the accident. Welsh is wonderful. •

# *Access: Bold as Love*

**By Nicholas Lemann**

## Behind the Oval Office: Winning the Presidency in the Nineties by Dick Morris

**(Random House, 359 pp., $25.95)**

What has drawn the most comment in Dick Morris's book is his predilection for taking the credit. It is, indeed, remarkable: by his account he has been responsible for everything from suggesting Christopher Reeve as a speaker at the Democratic Convention to intuiting and helping to engineer a world-historic "grand social contract" in the United States. But Washington is a city of credit-takers, and in this respect Morris is distinguished in degree, not in kind. The really interesting aspect of his book, and it is *really* interesting, is Dick Morris's portrait of his relationship with Bill Clinton.

Morris, famous for having had a paid mistress, functioned essentially as a paid mistress to Clinton; and he carried all of the psychological baggage that goes with being the other woman of a powerful man. The wife in this soap opera was not Hillary Clinton, who gets high marks from Morris for being "a sound, practical thinker"—no, the wronged woman was the Democratic Party, personified by the congressional leadership and the White House staff. She doesn't understand her man, she can't fulfill his deepest desire (to get re-elected), she will inevitably drag him down. And yet she functions as his official consort. Morris, by contrast, when he wishes to be with his loved one, must come in through the back door (the East Wing), alone, at night, passionately but illicitly.

The secrecy is thrilling at first. In the long run, however, the limited acceptance is wounding. The eternal dream of the mistress begins to take hold. Why can't he leave her and marry me? I want more than stolen hours devoted only to his most basic needs. I want to be seen with him, to be publicly at his side, to be allowed to walk into the Oval Office anytime. I want to talk about philosophy and governance; I'm not here just for polls.

You know how the story ends. The mistress winds up not betrothed but discarded, alone and hoping pathetically for just one precious moment back in her former station. But there is a twist. The man who was the object of all this desire doesn't quite get away. The secret arrangement is found out; it spills into the public part of his big-shot life; even after he has coolly terminated it, nothing is ever quite the same again.

One of Dick Morris's inflated claims is that he essentially invented the vocation of political consultant. That honor is usually accorded to people a generation older than him, F. Clifton White (Goldwater, 1964) on the Republican side and Joseph Napolitan (Humphrey, 1968) on the Democratic side; but it is true that Morris has been at it for a long time and that the work pushes a lot of buttons for him. The only child of a busy, successful professional couple in New York who "didn't much like the company of children," he found out that "commenting on international affairs was the only way for me to get my parents' attention." He has been trying to win attention, love and power by prattling brightly to politicians ever since. And it is delicious, for the perfection of his narrative, that Bill Clinton, then attorney general of Arkansas, was his very first client.

Morris, by his account, dissuades Clinton from running for the Senate and guides him to the governorship in 1978. Clinton then fires him, imposes a politically disastrous increase in the automobile license fee (which Morris had advised against) and loses in 1980. Morris returns and restores Clinton to the governorship in 1982. By 1992, however, Morris is consulting mostly for Republicans. When Clinton asks him to run the presidential campaign, he says no. Two years of excruciating out-of-the-loopness follow.

Then, on September 14, 1994, *he calls*: "A fix, rushing, warming, stimulating, enticing, addicting." Clinton turns to Morris because he atavistically senses the possibility of defeat. Morris re-establishes his bona fides by predicting the Democratic loss of the House and the Senate; and after the disastrous elections in November, 1994, the affair is resumed in earnest. At first, all is blissful:

> We were alone in the White House residence, and nobody knew I was there. As the president stood and looked over my shoulder, I worked at the typewriter on his 1995 State of the Union address. When I looked up, he seemed to loom over me like a sequoia. I turned fully around to look up at him, way up, and said, "Mr. President, you know, I've dreamed of doing exactly this in exactly this way ever since I was eight years old."
>
> He replied, "So did I," and left the room.

They decide to give the relationship a try and to cut off their other entanglements: Clinton stops seeing Stan Greenberg, his previous pollster, and Morris ends "my Republican relationships." Of this early, intimate period, Morris writes, "It was the happiest time of my life. I wish it could have gone on forever." Still, there is a gnawing and perilous desire on Morris's part for legitimacy. The first time that Clinton brings him out of the shadows and into the West Wing to work with the staff, "It felt very good." Soon Morris is permitted to assemble a small staff of his own, which feels even better. "The thrill of it is hard to describe." He wants "to capture that moment and keep it suspended in time, never to change."

Inevitably, Morris oversteps. Having been permitted to participate openly in the administration, and then to hire other political consultants, he begins to want to control the whole White House operation. He complains to Clinton about the appointment of two new deputy chiefs of staff who aren't Morris allies. This produces a scary but exciting presidential tantrum. Clinton, "red-faced ... jabbed me with his forefinger, and yelled." In retaliation, Morris quits and goes home to Connecticut, but Clin-



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ton soon calls to lure him back. "I imagined his long hand circling an imaginary globe in front of him as he illustrated his feelings." It doesn't take very much to get Morris to change his mind. Of course he'll come back. He's a romantic.

But there are new ground rules. More than a year has passed since the 1994 elections. Clinton, substantially thanks to Morris, has turned his situation around and looks like a good bet for re-election. This means that he doesn't need Morris nearly as much as Morris needs him. It's a piece of cake for Clinton to seduce Morris into returning by dangling the prospect of further intimacy. What's really going on, though, is that Morris is being quasi-marginalized: Clinton returns him to his former status as a one-on-one private adviser, greatly reducing his role in the West Wing. (The irony is obvious when Morris writes, "I always felt it was wrong for a consultant to detract attention from his boss." Morris's period of maximum self-engineered fame as the administration's secret genius came a year after his period of maximum influence.) Morris, blind to the real import of the bargain, eagerly accepts:

> In mid-January 1996, I entered the Oval Office for my crucial meeting with the president (a rare daytime one-on-one meeting).... He towered over the chair, the desk, and me.... We were alone....
>
> I pointed to his left shoulder. "You want me to sit right there, on your left shoulder, like a bird, and whisper in your ear three, four, five, ten times a day. Then, if you choose, you can use my advice to control your staff, your campaign, your dealings with Congress, your dealings with the NSC, to empower you."
>
> He smiled broadly and said, "You got it. I'll take what I want, and I'll discard what I don't want, but leave it with me; don't do it yourself. Work through me."
>
> It wasn't a bad offer. He was asking me, in effect, to cross the space that separated him from everyone else who worked for him.

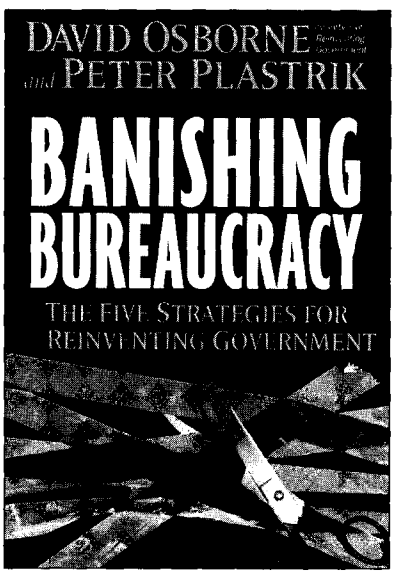
The trouble with this arrangement is that Morris was completely dependent on the whims of Clinton. His craving for closeness is so intense that he can see only that he is getting increased access; but he is blind to the fragility of his position. He constantly reassures us (and himself) that things are even better than before: "by now my relationship with the president had grown still closer"; "in unusually long phone calls, he expressed his anxiety to me"; "never talk to me about foreign policy in the presence of a third person [he quotes Clinton as telling him]. Always do it one-on-one with me." When other aides are around, Morris doesn't mind, even though he no longer has any authority over them, because he is confident that Clinton cares about him more deeply than he cares about them. At one particularly emotional meeting, Clinton, "red in the face and full throated in his cry of pain," begins railing at his staff:

> The president appeared to be scolding them, but he was, of course, scolding me, seated immediately to his left, catching a side view of his rage as he projected it toward everyone but me.... I knew he was berating the group as a way of testing me to make sure I stood my ground.... He wanted to quiet his worries and soothe his pain....

Finally Morris intercedes, offering an ardent little speech. And after he has finished, he reports with satisfaction, "The president slumped back in his chair, emotionally spent."

Just before his downfall, Morris, hoping against hope, tells himself that his relationship with Clinton is about to ascend to a new empyrean. "... [H]e increasingly saw me not as a political medicine man but as an adviser who could develop programmatic ideas to express concretely his idea of where he wanted to lead America." Actually, with Clinton comfortably ahead and Morris directly responsible for nothing, he is utterly expendable, and when the Sherry Row-


The Road Map to Make Reinvention Work




"*BANISHING BUREAUCRACY* GIVES YOU THE PROVEN, practical strategies that have triggered fundamental improvement around the globe—from the biggest national bureaucracies to the toughest cities. In the 1990s, most public organizations have to do significantly more with significantly less. This book tells us how."
—KURT L. SCHMOKE, Democratic Mayor of Baltimore

"AS MAYOR OF NEW YORK CITY, I HAVE USED MANY OF the lessons from *Reinventing Government* to make our local government work better and smarter. *Banishing Bureaucracy* will help government managers and elected officials go even further."
—RUDOLPH W. GIULIANI, Republican Mayor of New York

For information on *Banishing Bureaucracy* workshops, send your request including name and address to:
fax # 510-339-3803 or email: jmasters@cencomfut.com

ADDISON-WESLEY




LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lands scandal breaks, Clinton instantly rids himself of him. Morris, devastated, contemplates suicide. In the book's final scene, which is heartbreaking though Morris means it to be hopeful, he calls the White House and asks that the president be told that he is "in a bad way." A very long day later, Clinton calls back—or, as Morris writes, "he came back to me"—and Morris tells him that "I think our relationship had developed a new dimension, and I so desperately wanted it to continue." Fat chance. Good morning heartache, sit down.

Morris's melodrama is compelling—even as it is repelling—reading. And the altered state into which Morris and Clinton seem to have gotten themselves has some historical importance. It led them to conduct presidential politics in an overheated, rule-breaking way that is likely to have a lasting impact. The Clinton campaign in 1996 set new markers in the areas of spending (and therefore fund-raising), of manacling the candidate's every word and deed to poll results, and allowing the political exigencies of the moment to invade policy-making. It will take courage and imagination for future campaigns to forswear the practices that Morris and Clinton established.

It is possible, of course, that what Morris presents as Morris-and-Clinton was actually just Morris. He did see only one slice of the presidency, and he does present Clinton as an unknowable man. (In one of the book's more bizarre incidents, Morris's wife has the White House operators interrupt a meeting in the Oval Office so that he can be told that his dog has died. Morris naturally informs the president, who reacts with insufficient feeling, "displaying once more that he is better with numbers than with emotion.") Still, Morris's version has something important to recommend it, which is that what he wanted Clinton to do, Clinton mostly did.

Even if Clinton didn't really believe that they were bonding, and even if we discount Morris's claim to have influenced practically everything that the administration did, it is indisputable that Morris set the course. From working with Republicans, Morris knew what beats Democrats: "Raise taxes, go soft on crime, oppose work for welfare, weaken the military? They're all over you yelling 'liberal.' If you wander into their field of fire, they're going to kill you every time." So the plan was to deny the Republicans all their standard issues. The next step was what Morris insists on calling "triangulation," though the metaphor is strained: devising a position for Clinton that was located between the positions of the two parties in Congress. The chief example of triangulation, and the subject of what sounds like a fierce battle within the White House, was getting Clinton to commit himself to proposing a balanced budget (which he did in June 1995), rather than simply criticizing the cuts in the Republican budget proposals.

DICK MORRIS BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Since Morris ceaselessly promoted triangulation to reporters as a stroke of genius while downplaying other things that he was up to, it has gotten more attention than it deserves. Morris's more significant breakthrough was to sell Clinton on the idea of a vast national advertising campaign beginning in the summer of 1995, just after triangulation had been achieved. According to Morris, 125 million Americans saw a Clinton commercial three times a week for the entire eighteen months before the 1996 election. Morris insists that the ads were "issue-oriented," since he had forsworn negative advertising; but that's nonsense. Here is how Morris himself describes the best-known commercial:

> The ads were devastating. One ... featured an EKG machine monitoring a patient's heartbeat as the announcer describes the premium increases and benefit cuts the Republicans planned for Medicare. Finally, the comforting beeps stop and we hear the terrifying, continuous monotone and see the flat line on the screen that means Medicare has died.

Morris's enormously expensive ad buy set a couple of processes in motion. It was directly the cause of the most recent wave of Clinton scandals, because the administration had to raise much more money than Democrats had ever raised before, so as to pay for the ads. It is not possible to bring political fund-raising totals up to a new level without also bringing political fund-raising techniques down to a new level. Also, advertising is almost always based on market research. In Morris's words, "The key is to advertise your positions only if the public agrees with them." If unprecedented tens of millions of dollars were going to be spent on ads, and if these ads were to be paid for with "soft money" and so couldn't be explicitly candidate-promoting, then an elaborate polling operation had to be set up that would find out what Americans wanted from their government, so that the ads could then promise that Clinton would give it to them. In this way, the imperatives of the ad buy began to drive government policy.

During his heyday in 1995, Morris sat at the head of his great polling-advertising-spending machine, his mind even more overwrought than it usually is. "I came to love our weekly polls of America," he says. In this frame of mind, he began to form a vision. He perceived



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

# Where's the Evidence?

One of the hottest ideas in school reform right now is decentralization. Its supporters blame school district bureaucracies and the rules they spawn for much of what is wrong with our schools. They are convinced that if we decentralize school districts, we will get responsive, high-achieving schools.

According to the critics, bureaucrats and bureaucratic rules create a one-size-fits-all approach to teaching and learning, even though different neighborhoods and communities want different things for their students and students vary in the kind of education they need. As for the people who work in these big, centralized systems, they are rewarded for following rules and regulations rather than getting results with students.

Decentralization is touted as the panacea for all of our school problems.

Decentralization is touted as the panacea for these problems. Its supporters tell us that it loosens the grip of bureaucratic rules and empowers people in a community to decide what kind of schools they want and to make sure they get them. And in decentralized schools, principals and teachers don't have to spend a lot of time and energy jumping through bureaucratic hoops. So they are better able to fulfill the real mission of the schools—helping students learn.

All of this sounds pretty convincing, but we don't have to take it on faith. New York City has just reached the end of a 25-year experiment that allows us to test many of these assertions about decentralization. In the late 1960s, New York City's system of 1,000 schools was broken up into 32 community school districts. The complaints that led to this breakup sound very familiar. People said that central office administrators didn't know or care what was going on in local schools or communities. They said that these bureaucrats were in no way representative of the diverse groups in the city, and they were not doing a good job of educating the kids. Decentralization was the solution of choice. Its supporters figured that when the system was broken up and each community could elect its own board, hire its own administrators, and set up its own curriculum, people would at last have schools tailored to their own needs and desires. As a result, student achievement would soar. Besides, they said, nothing could be worse than the current system.

What happened bore no resemblance to what supporters had hoped for or expected. Over the years, some New York City community school boards became legendary for their corruption and indifference to academics. Of course there were districts where superintendents and community school boards worked together and achieved good things for their students. But in many others, the board functioned chiefly as a source of patronage and jobs. Board members routinely handed out jobs to relatives and friends or sold them for money or drugs. Even board members who may have been honest were often ignorant of the basic facts about their schools. When the *New York Daily News* interviewed 236 of the 288 community board members, it found that a majority did not know how many students they had in their district, what percentage of students were reading and doing math at grade level or the amount of their district budgets—even though they had just voted on the budgets. Why didn't communities get rid of these crooks and incompetents? Because it is easy to get reelected when the turnout for an election is under 10 percent. As for student achievement, it did not improve, and it may have gotten worse.

A couple of months ago, the New York State legislature decided it was time to return a good deal of the power that had been in the hands of community school boards to the chancellor of the New York City schools.

Does the New York experience refute the current wisdom that decentralization is good and centralization is bad? Should we be opposing, on principle, the push for charter schools and other similar schools run by businesses or community groups, which are largely independent of school districts? Not necessarily. Decentralization may work when certain things are highly centralized—when there are rigorous, grade-by-grade academic standards set at a state or national level, assessments based on those standards, and accountability for the way public money is spent, to name a few. The Japanese education system demonstrates this very well. But decentralization can't work without at least these basics in place.

Supporters of decentralization assume that we will improve student achievement by changing the way schools are governed, but where is the evidence? Decentralizing the New York City system did nothing to improve student achievement. Kentucky's decentralized schools yielded such poor student achievement that, when the system was overhauled several years ago, state-defined standards and assessments were introduced. The American education system is already the most decentralized in the industrialized world, and the result is a system in which some kids get a pretty good education and others get garbage—often in the same school district. Some panacea.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address Mr. Shanker at AFT, 555 New Jersey Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1997 by Albert Shanker. Visit the AFT web site (http://www.aft.org).

ADVERTISEMENT

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that the country's focus was shifting away from the economic worry that had dominated the campaign in 1992 and over to concern about the condition of the social fabric. In 1996 the Clinton campaign's motto was, in effect, "It's the society, stupid." Morris relentlessly quashed all attempts from within the Clinton camp to bring up the issues of income inequality and job insecurity. ("'Class warfare doesn't work in America,' I told the president.") Instead, he fixed on the idea of developing a Democratic social-issue agenda that would be ambitious enough to answer voters' concerns about "values," but not so ambitious as to require expensive new programs.

It is easy to understand (though Morris does not understand) why everybody else in the administration was so hostile to the "exciting issue ideas for the country" that he rolled out all through the long campaign. Morris, and therefore Clinton, constantly raised the expectation that the budget could be balanced without cutting entitlement spending (which turns out, of course, not to be the case). Eager to prevent the Republicans from trumping them by promising to cut taxes, they tried to finance every new initiative with a tax credit, a technique that generates budget-balancing problems and tends not to get the program to the people who need it most. Plucking ideas from the dustbin of legislative history, or from the random suggestions of friends and relatives, Morris would poll them, and, if the numbers were good, push them, without any review at all. Was the policy out of proportion to the problem, such as calling out the National Guard all over the South to prevent church burnings, or mandating four hours a month of family leave so that parents could take their children to the doctor? Did it set in granite a major change without any consultation with those who would be affected, such as creating the Red Rocks national wilderness area? Did it trample civil liberties, such as the numerous censorings of television and Internet material that he had in mind? Morris didn't care, and he didn't see why anyone else would care.

In Morris's dream of life in the second term, his shift from strategist to philosopher-king would be accompanied by a much grander set of initiatives. He convinced Clinton to sign the welfare bill by telling him that it would make possible not only "a massive program of inner-city jobs for people getting off welfare," but an entire "sixties-like era of commitment to helping poor people." (Not a prayer.) And even this would be only the beginning. Together they would also reform public education, television broadcasting, immigration policy and on and on. No one ought to lose any sleep over the prospect of Morris presiding over a remaking of the American polity. Even if it were possible for him to return to his golden days in the West Wing, it would be impossible for him to do much, because he and Clinton have so expertly conditioned the public to believe that Clinton will never raise taxes or create any expensive new government programs. The contradiction in Morris's logic—encouraging people to look to the government to address the nation's problems, while promising to cut government back—cannot be elided forever.

Morris criticizes the Republicans for being dumb about the market-testing of ideas, but at the time that he was brought in, the Republicans were being smart about it. The Contract with America was heavily pre-polled and advertised. It failed as a template for governance because, its inflated rhetoric about revolution and the end of government notwithstanding, it was really just a congeries of small, popular positions and favors to the lobby groups that were going to pay for the ads. Morris stemmed the Republican tide by venturing even deeper into the politics of perception. The result is the same for Bill Clinton in 1997 as it was for Newt Gingrich in 1995: he is left not with a real, coherent and practicable program, but with a collection of onerous due bills and a list of unkeepable promises. Love affairs can have long aftermaths.

NICHOLAS LEMANN is national correspondent of *The Atlantic Monthly*.

**Reading, translating, and speaking Homer.**

# *War and Peace*

## BY PETER GREEN

No two people agree on the nature of a classic, but almost everyone will concede that, however you define the category, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* belong in it. The track-record of these huge epic poems is hard to match. For over two and a half millennia, the Western world has seen them as the ultimate source and exemplar for all subsequent European poetry. From Aeschylus, who described his plays as no more than slices from great Homer's banquet, to Matthew Arnold, who saw in the *Iliad* "perfect plainness of speech allied with perfect nobleness," the line of high validation runs virtually unbroken.

Nor has the praise been limited to literary excellence. The ancient world turned to Homer for instruction in everything from social decorum to moral excellence, from religious duties to the proper conduct of a battle. (This last, as Jonathan Shay demonstrated in *Achilles in Vietnam*, was not quite so foolish a trust as some have supposed.) Homeric epic was described by a later, more doctrinal age, somewhat patronizingly, as "the Bible of the Greeks," the best they could come up with, presumably, in the absence of the Nicene Creed and the Thirty-Nine Articles.

All the same, criticism was never lacking. As early as the sixth century B.C., Xenophanes laid into Homer for the way he presented the Olympian gods. Mean, spiteful and narcissistic, all too human in appearance and conduct—Xenophanes attacked their anthropomorphism in the same breath as their immorality—these privileged sexual predators bore an embarrassing resemblance to old-style unregenerate village elders. They were also immortal and omnipotent, what Homer called the "easy livers." It is not hard to see how they must have offended the new middle-class morality of the polis,

*Homer: The Odyssey*
translated by Robert Fagles
Introduction and notes by Bernard Knox
(Viking Penguin, 541 pp., $35)

*Homer: The Odyssey*
Unabridged audiobook of Robert Fagles' translation read by Ian McKellen
(Penguin Audiobooks, 12 cassettes, $45.95)

*The Odyssey Re-Formed*
Frederick Ahl and Hanna M. Roisman
(Cornell University Press, 341 pp., $19.95)

*Homer in English*
edited by George Steiner
(Penguin Books, 355 pp., $14.95)



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the city-state.

The extraordinary thing is how hard, and with what ingenuity, succeeding generations fought to preserve every aspect of Homer intact, including his status as model for all the virtues. A whole industry grew up devoted to what became known as "saving the appearances." Did the growth of scientific knowledge seem to invalidate Homeric facts? Then rationalize them into conformity without abandoning them. Were the moral attitudes, particularly the sexual attitudes, that Homer describes too gross for the new delicacy to swallow? No problem: what couldn't be rationalized was allegorized. Modern parallels suggest themselves.

But far more remarkable than these techniques of survival and adaptation is Homer's extraordinary elusiveness. No other cultural icon, not even Shakespeare, is so hard to grasp. As Homeric scholars are well aware (and as Bernard Knox more or less admits in the course of his crystalline introduction to Robert Fagles' new translation), their poet resembles nothing so much as Churchill's definition of the Soviet Union: a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma. We know neither when nor where Homer lived. Nor did the ancient world, which dated him variously from the time of the Trojan War to the mid-ninth century. Too early, scholars confidently assert; but their own current estimate of c. 700 is little more than an informed guess.

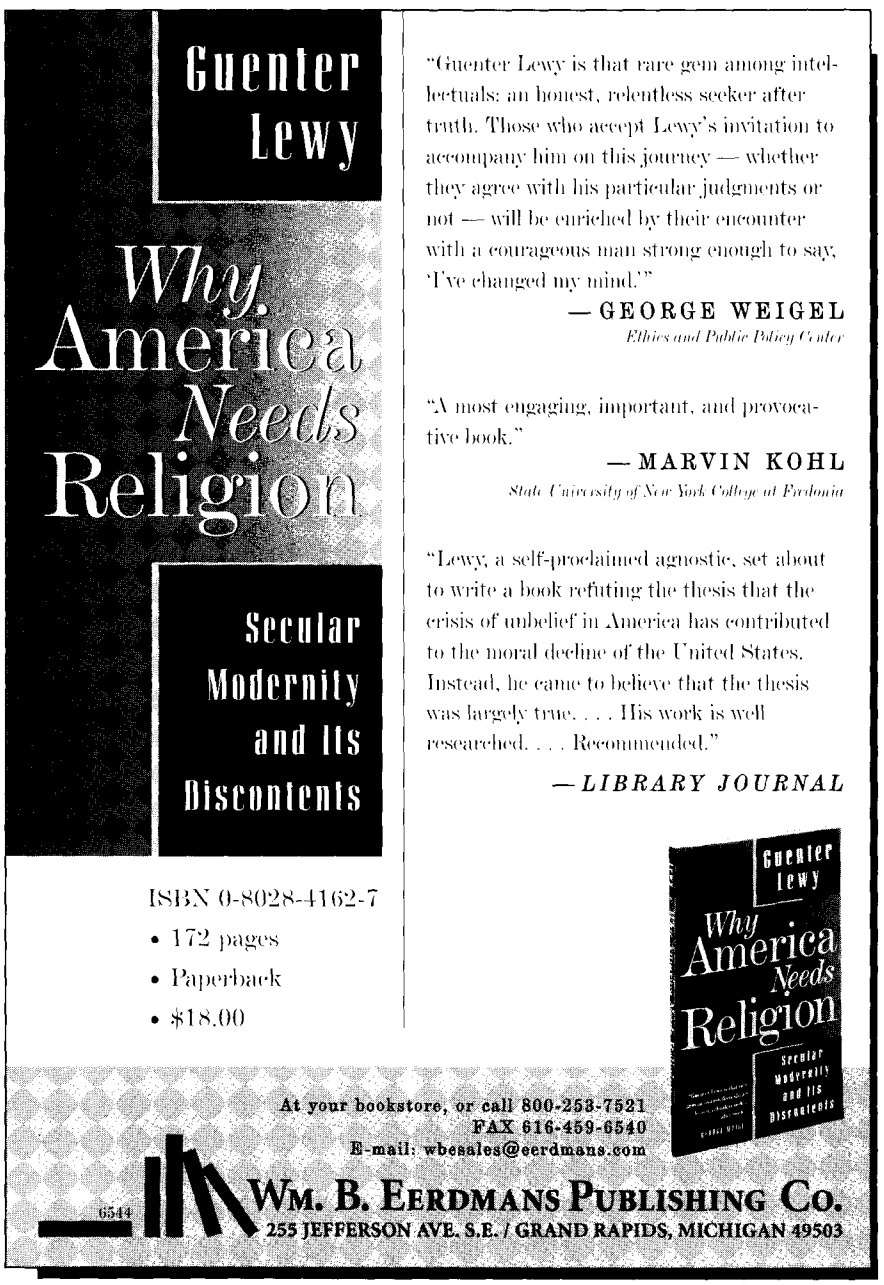
Not even his name is certain. *Homeros* means "hostage." Might he have been a prisoner of war? There is less inclination today than there once was to deny his identity altogether and treat the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* as collections of lays put together by anonymous bards, or even by the *Volksgeist*; but opinions still remain divided over their attribution to one author or two, owing to the supposed differences, in quality and in nature, between the two poems. This is about as sensible as saying that Shakespeare could not have written *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Henry IV*, and never mind the fact that Falstaff, like Odysseus, figures in both works.

Even in antiquity, half a dozen cities competed as Homer's birthplace. Linguistic considerations make somewhere in Ionia, or modern Aegean Turkey, a safe bet. Pindar opted for Smyrna, Semonides for Chios: those were the favorites. At the close of the Homeric *Hymn to Delian Apollo*, the anonymous narrator apostrophizes the maidens of Delos:

> ... remember me hereafter
> when some man of those here on earth,
> a stranger
> who has suffered much, comes before you
> and enquires:
> "Maidens, who for you is the sweetest
> of those singers
> that visit here, and in whom do you most
> delight?",
> then make answer all together, in clear
> chorus:
> "A blind man, who makes his home on
> rocky Chios:
> his are the songs that will all remain
> supreme for ever."'

Chios later became a base for the guild of Homeric bards, and thus comes out as top contender; but the well-known tradition about Homer's blindness depends ultimately on this passage alone, which does not even name him.

Even if the poet escapes us, we have the poems. Or so you might have thought. In the current climate of critical opinion, a text minus its author should be a godsend: no distracting background, and free play for every persona—the sacred history of "the death of the author." But here, too, ambiguities abound, not least in the matter of composition. Knox gives a skillful rundown of the problems. Until the eighteenth century, it was taken for granted that Homer wrote his poems. Nobody took any notice of the ancient Jewish historian Josephus, who, not content with having the heroes of the Trojan War illiterate, argued that Homer himself "did not leave his poems in writing," but that various separate lays were "transmitted by memory" and "not unified until much later."



Guenter Lewy
Why America Needs Religion
Secular Modernity and Its Discontents
"Guenter Lewy is that rare gem among intellectuals: an honest, relentless seeker after truth. Those who accept Lewy's invitation to accompany him on this journey — whether they agree with his particular judgments or not — will be enriched by their encounter with a courageous man strong enough to say, 'I've changed my mind.'"
— GEORGE WEIGEL
Ethics and Public Policy Center
"A most engaging, important, and provocative book."
— MARVIN KOHL
State University of New York College at Fredonia
"Lewy, a self-proclaimed agnostic, set about to write a book refuting the thesis that the crisis of unbelief in America has contributed to the moral decline of the United States. Instead, he came to believe that the thesis was largely true. . . . His work is well researched. . . . Recommended."
— LIBRARY JOURNAL
ISBN 0-8028-4162-7
• 172 pages
• Paperback
• $18.00
At your bookstore, or call 800-253-7521
FAX 616-459-6540
E-mail: wbessles@eerdmans.com
6544
WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING CO.
255 JEFFERSON AVE. S.E. / GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN 49503




LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This passage, of course, gave marvelous ammunition to the critics who might be termed the New Anti-Literatists, Robert Wood in his *Essay on the Original Genius of Homer* (1769), and F.A. Wolf, who developed Wood's ideas in a famous monograph, *Prolegomena ad Homerum* (1795). Between them, they inaugurated a theory of oral composition which is still very much around. Unfortunately, they equated illiteracy with ignorance, and thus embraced Josephus's notion of the dim peasant-poet who, lacking the skill for architectonic composition, was forced to deal in ballads and short lays. Add the Romantic revival and Vico's quaint notion of Homeric epic as the collective creative wisdom of the Greek people, and the scene is set for eager analysts chopping up the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* into putative mini-epics or *epyllia*, linguists trying to distinguish chronological strata by verbal usage (Homeric Greek is an artificial literary language anyway), and, after Schliemann, archaeologists eager to match objets d'art with items—a boars'-tusk helmet or Nestor's dove-goblet—from Homer's lovingly described treasure-trove.

Into this confused and confusing scene there burst, in 1928, the brilliant young American scholar Milman Parry, whose work was not understood, much less appreciated, until long after his premature death a mere seven years later. It was Parry's great virtue to deduce, from close analysis of Homer's repetitive formulaic phrases, that these were building blocks designed to help in the oral construction of the epic hexameter. The trouble was that Parry placed too much emphasis on the supposedly improvisational nature of Homeric verse, thus underestimating its structural sophistication. As Knox observes, in a characteristically accurate statement enshrined in a neat apothegm, "it is the fate of most new and valuable insights to be enthusiastically developed beyond the limits of certainty, or even of probability."

Parry's disciple Albert Lord was adamant that neither writing nor large-scale memorization played any part in Homer's creative process. The problem was that his comparisons with the rambling improvisations of illiterate South Slav bards raised more questions than they answered; and critics were not slow to point out that, whatever happened in Yugoslavia, oral poets from regions as far apart as Africa and the Blasket islands (off the west coast of Ireland) did memorize verse to a prodigious extent. Geoffrey Kirk, as a compromise, posited an oral "monumental composer" whose superior work imposed itself on the tradition, and after a generation or two was written down.

Now it's beginning to look as though the process has come full circle, with the readmission of the written word, as a serendipitous new tool, to the age-old process of oral composition. In Knox's judgment, we must "envisage a highly creative oral poet, master of the repertoire of inherited material and technique, who used the new instrument of writing to build, probably over the course of a lifetime, an epic poem on a scale beyond the imagination of his predecessors." This I have long regarded as the likeliest and most satisfying explanation, in which writing as such becomes the stimulus and the means to achieve bold new structural invention. Boldness, indeed, was in the air of that new age. It cannot be pure coincidence that the same period also saw the production of those huge Geometric funerary vases, some over five feet tall, in the Kerameikos quarter of Athens. Like epic, they too give the appearance of reaching out, seemingly overnight, for architectonic greatness.

Work on the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* will have been slow and experimental, lasting for years, perhaps representing one man's whole creative production. Early written scripts were crude (non-cursive capitals lacking both word-divisions and punctuation), and writing was therefore laborious, with cross-referencing all but impossible. One of the beauties of this account is that it more than explains many minor inconsistencies in the poems. (They have bothered scholars, though non-professional readers almost never notice them.) Such slips are both natural and inevitable, and they are not decisive evidence for multiple composition.

Indeed, the fact that, as Swift said, "learned commentators view/ in Homer more than Homer knew" has never been


HELP FUND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

When you establish an IHF Annuity, you get to help humanity as well as yourself.

HELP HUMANITY.

Your contribution can either help to build schools of higher education, hospitals, homes for the elderly, parks, fund medical research and much more. It's up to you to choose a cause that your family name will be associated with – for generations to come.

HELP YOURSELF.

Saving for one's retirement is a lifetime job! If you establish an IHF Lifetime Annuity for yourself, there are many benefits. You get a high rate of return, a meaningful tax deduction, and save on estate tax.

Find out more about making an emotional investment with IHF. Improve your financial picture while helping to improve the world.

IHF

ISRAEL HISTADRUT FOUNDATION INC.

GIFTS THAT GIVE BACK




LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

an obstacle to his enthusiastic enjoyment by the world at large, which remains blithely indifferent to Unitarians and Separatists, Athenian political interpolations, false endings, oral versus literary theories or the vagaries of Hellenistic editors. No one outside academe cares that Homer's familiar book-divisions were established hundreds of years later by scholars in Alexandria. The audiences that have kept these epics alive century after century practice a willing suspension of disbelief, opening their hearts and minds to the powerful magic of great poetic narrative. It is a relationship as old as the first tale-spinner holding his listeners entranced by the first flickering campfire.

The great split comes between advocates of the *Iliad* and advocates of the *Odyssey*. You can almost divide the world into Iliadics and Odysseans, and this reflects the fundamental differences in theme, mood, setting, character-emphasis, social priorities (gender-emphasis included) and moral beliefs that the two poems reveal. Hence, of course, the two-author theory. The *Iliad* deals with existence totally conditioned by, and refracted through, a long grinding war. Peace—the world of farming and trade, weddings and lawsuits, domesticity and stability—is only glimpsed in a series of vivid extended similes, to remind protagonists and listeners alike of what is missing from the claustrophobic circle of slaughter, disease and arrogant pride. Heroism is rooted in an archaic code of formal honor. Only at rare moments, most notably in the angry outburst of that quintessential rabble-rousing underdog Thersites, are there hints of coming change.

Yet, as Homer's audience knew, heroic warfare and the heroic code were doomed. Only a few years after the end of the Trojan War—and in part owing to the decade-long absence of so many mainland warriors—Nestor's stronghold of Pylos was destroyed. Tiryns, Argos, Mycenae and the rest soon also fell. Mycenaean society, which had nurtured the epic myths, ceased to exist, except in the memory of refugees who had fled across the Aegean to Ionia, taking their traditions with them. It was for their descendants, petty Ionian princelings such as Agamemnon of Cyme, endowed with great ancestral names, that Homer and his like performed.

Thus, however fictionalized the Homeric epics may be, they reflect a fundamental watershed in Greek history. Odysseus, who even in the *Iliad* comes across as a no-nonsense pragmatist, a cunning trickster who puts a high priority on food, and a notably inventive raconteur, survives. Achilles, strangled by his own moral code and rampant egotism, hating liars "like the very Gates of Death," does not survive. The lesson—a congenial one for a modern audience—is hard to miss; and Achilles, whose angry ghost in Hades would rather be a living day-laborer than king among the dead, has learned it too late.

The *Odyssey* takes place in the world of the *Iliad*'s similes. The scene, with all its incidental violence, is that of peace, not war. The claustrophobia has been blown away, and the heroic code with it. What we have here may be the aftermath of war, interspersed with monsters and sudden death (drowning, or tumbling off a roof when drunk, or making a meal for a one-eyed giant cannibal), but it is the world, in essence, of the early colonists. The seas have opened up again, trade is possible, wonders lurk in the uncharted west. Twelve men in a fragile boat can take their chances beyond the far horizon. The *Odyssey* heralds the advent of the age of exploration and self-reliance, the emergence of Protagorean man as the maker of a new world. It embraces the whole Mediterranean: there is space and movement and room to breathe. In the *Iliad*, you are always conscious of the ships and the city walls and the filth-littered camp, a psychological ring choking the story. The *Odyssey*, by contrast, is full of light, open to the winds of change.

It also has the right protagonist. Odysseus can boast impeccable heroic antecedents, but he is not really the heroic type: no tall clean-limbed Achaean he, but short and barrel-chested, perhaps red-haired, broad of stance, a shade unaristocratic. (This, interestingly, is just the type recommended by the bloody-minded soldier-poet Archilochos a generation or two later.) Where other heroes rant about honor and prerogatives, in a


# AND HELP FUND YOUR OWN RETIREMENT.

| AGE | RATE | TAX EXEMPT INCOME | TAX DEDUCTION |
|---|---|---|---|
| 55 | 7.0% | 36.1% | 28.0% |
| 65 | 7.6% | 43.2% | 34.6% |
| 75 | 8.8% | 52.8% | 42.4% |
| 85 | 11.7% | 63.9% | 49.1% |

PLEASE SEND ME MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ESTABLISHING AN IHF ANNUITY. MY AGE IS _____.

☐ PLEASE SEND ME INFORMATION ABOUT OTHER IHF LIFE INCOME PLANS.

MY NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

PHONE _____

IHF

NRGAF0210

CALL ROBERT B. LEVY AT 1-800-443-4256
OR SEND THIS COUPON TO: ISRAEL HISTADRUT FOUNDATION, INC., 276 FIFTH AVE., NEW YORK, NY 10001.




LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

passionate stew of self-esteem, Odysseus is practical, prudent, with an eye to immediate advantage. He is far from cowardly, but he is visibly moving away from the old heroic tribalism to that new collective sense of civic reality that later found itself enshrined in the city-state. No coming home with his shield or on it for him. Like several later poets, he would rather run and live to fight another day.

W.B. Stanford once remarked that "when the typical hero found his path to fame and glory blocked, his instinct was to batter his own or someone else's head against the obstacle until something broke." No wonder that Alexander the Great modeled himself on Achilles. Odysseus, on the other hand, would connive and finagle his way out of trouble, unheroically clinging under the belly of a ram if need be. (He was a good tactician but a hopeless strategist, as Frederick Ahl and Hanna M. Roisman acutely remark.) It took the Ithacan suitors' threat to his home, his wife and his property to make him exact a revenge as ruthlessly violent as Achilles could have wished.

Between them, then, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* express the two great archetypal conditions of human nature: war and peace, worlds static and dynamic, moral conservatism and radical pragmatism, old aristocratic tribal ways slowly yielding to a new and self-reliant colonial expansiveness, rational thought making inroads on hallowed heroic myth. Both are valid, both are important as partial reflections of human nature. Yet it remains true—and I'm not sure what this tells us about the scholarly mind—that academic aficionados of the *Iliad* have tended to despise the *Odyssey*, carefully cloaking their contempt in literary terms. The entry on Homer in the recently published third edition of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* is typical, briskly dismissing the *Odyssey* as "a romance, enjoyable at a more superficial level than the heroic/tragic *Iliad*." It would be about as reasonable to describe the *Iliad* as the longest and bloodiest narcissistic sulk in literature.

I am reminded of the late Moses Finley, who simply couldn't abide the Minoans of Bronze Age Crete, finding them tinkly, superficial, effete and over-addicted to creature comforts in comparison with the embattled Mycenaean warriors on the mainland. Yet there is more to the archaic Greek world than an obsolete heroic code, the childish yet monstrous pride of wounded egotism, and unending warfare; and it is in the *Odyssey*, not the *Iliad*, that we find it. Today, in fact, with the exciting advances in our understanding of literature that serious feminist scholarship has brought, we are probably better placed than ever before to appreciate the *Odyssey* at its true worth. Both Fagles and Knox see this clearly, and it is one of the elements that make Fagles' new translation such a striking success.

People are always saying how modern the *Odyssey* is, and in many ways they are right. There is more scope for the development of personal (as opposed to public) relationships once the constraints of battle and siege are removed. All Andromache can do for Hector is encourage him before he leaves to fight and mourn him when he's dead. The role of women in the *Odyssey*, by contrast, is enormously enhanced, from the enigmatic and beleaguered Penelope, beset by suitors and symbolic dreams, to the Phaeacian princess Nausicaa. This well-bred yet innocent young lady does her own laundry, remains quite unfazed by a large naked stranger emerging from the shrubbery, and is not above hinting at her availability for marriage. She might almost have been invented by Jane Austen. In Circe and Calypso, moreover, there is a sophisticated erotic and social awareness quite alien to the *Iliad*. The most striking contrast is in the treatment of Helen. Whereas in the *Iliad* she is simply a disruptive femme fatale, the irresistible and disastrous embodiment of sex, in the *Odyssey* she is drawn, with sly comic brilliance, as a kind of Marin County hostess, handing out hash (or the equivalent) to guests, and reminiscing, in postwar wicked-old-me mode, about life among all those big handsome Trojans.

Still, if in some ways the *Odyssey* is a novel ahead of its time, in other ways it reads like a sophisticated film-script. Its time-sequences play hopscotch with the Aristotelian unities in ways undreamed-of in the *Iliad*. Its main character does not appear until Book 5, though we are never allowed to forget him. The poem opens at the very end of Odysseus's ten-year struggle to get home, with Telemachus (a wonderful portrait of a son who has grown up among women, without a father's influence) traveling to Pylos and Sparta to seek news of him, and only too glad to get away from his mother, as well as from all those ambitious young aristocratic louts who are pursuing her. Cut to Odysseus on Calypso's island of Ogygia, where he's been taking it easy for seven years, but is now weepy-nostalgic for home and wife, since, as Homer notes in an acid aside, "the nymph no longer pleased."

There follow his adventures upon leaving Calypso, until he is washed up on Scheria. Here, in a gigantic four-book flashback, he narrates to King Alcinous and the other guests events covering the period between his leaving Troy and being taken in by Calypso. (This sequence includes all his off-the-map activities: the encounters with the Cyclops and the Circe, the descent to Hades, the Sirens, the slaughter of the Cattle of the Sun.) Only with his return to Ithaca—left sleeping amid his guest-gifts by a silent Scherian crew—does the time-sequence move straight forward, from his first recognition by son and retainers to the climactic killing of the wooers and its grim aftermath, plus his final reunion with Penelope, in whom solitude and distrust have become so ingrained that even when she admits to recognizing her husband we hardly believe her. Loneliness breeds its own defenses.

Neither the narrative nor the characters of the *Odyssey*, in fact, are nearly as straightforward as they seem. I have listened to long and passionate debates about Penelope's inner psychology. What did she really think about the suitors and remarriage? How are we to interpret her dreams? At what point did she recognize the ragged old beggar as her husband? What influence did this have on, say, her test with the bow? In *The Odyssey Re-Formed*, Frederick Ahl and Hanna M. Roisman suggest, among other things, that Odysseus's return was in fact calamitous for Penelope, destroying much of her world, and leaving behind serious unresolved problems, such as the vendettas raised by the families of the dead suitors. This playing with variant mythical sources can get too clever by half—Ahl's last venture in the genre tried to show that Sophocles' Oedipus was the victim of a frame-up and not at all guilty of incest—but the problems that he and Roisman raise about Odysseus compel our serious attention.

They see the poem as a conflict "between mutually opposed, contradictory truths," and Odysseus himself as virtually defined by his unending manipulation of those truths. In other words, he is a compulsive liar. His urge to deceive extends even to his father, old Laertes, who is lied to and tested, quite unnecessarily, when they meet. As the Muses told Hesiod, they knew how to lie when they felt so inclined, and the theme has come to be (rather symptomatically) popular with classicists nowadays: at least three recent works have been devoted to it. It is tempting to go a step further and argue that the highly circumstantial and mundane soldier-of-fortune cover-story used by our hero in the second half of the poem does (his supposed Cretan



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

identity apart) report the truth, while his performance for the Phaeacians actually is the mixture of fiction and folk-tale it seems, not to mention its author's most elaborate deception.

Such a solution would, among other things, satisfy those who complain that the *Odyssey* veers too wildly between fantasy and realism. If all Odysseus's magical encounters, not to mention that haunting descent to Hades, are simply items from the repertory of a master con-man with the knack of adapting narrative style to audience, then the inconsistencies vanish. This notion is also nicely in tune with the times. Unlike Bacon's jesting Pilate, who asked what truth was but would not stay for an answer, current scholarship seems rather inclined to reduce truth to a mess of conflicting perceptions and propaganda. The nihilism of this attitude, this "perspectivism," can be irritating, but when applied to the *Odyssey* it works surprisingly well.

If endless fresh layers of meaning constitute a sure mark of a classic, another, of course, is the work's ability to retain its attraction through the inevitably distorting lens of translation. For some reason, this seems especially true of English—"where," as George Steiner points out in the introduction to his excellent anthology *Homer in English*, "'English' comprises not only the varieties of the language spoken and written in Britain since the late Middle Ages, but the entire global spectrum.... Starting with the *Seege of Troy* romance and the *Laud Troy Book* ... the history of imitations, adaptations, sequels and translations is never-ending." There are more English versions of Homer than of the Bible. Until the very end of the sixteenth century, the business of Troy had been filtered through Latin, Italian and French sources. Then came George Chapman, with his fourteeners (thundering or lumbering, opinions differ) for the *Iliad*, and his rhymed heroic couplets, precursors of Pope and Dryden, for the *Odyssey*. How much Greek Chapman knew is debatable; but from that moment Homer was launched on an English career that today, 400 years later, seems inexhaustibly renewable.

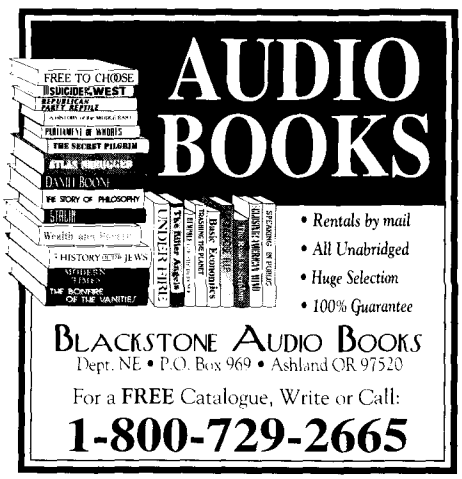
Leafing through *Homer in English* is an extraordinary experience. We find versions Elizabethan, Jacobean, Augustan, Romantic, Victorian, Georgian, contemporary. The voices are English, Scottish, American, West Indian, Irish. As Steiner says, "we can follow the development of the language, of its vocabularies, syntax, and semantic resources," not to mention every kind of metrical experiment: rhyme royal, Spenserian stanzas, blank verse, free verse, accentual hexameters, even the AABA stanza (for the *Odyssey*) best known from the *Rubayat* of Omer Khayyam. Steiner is right to stress the despotic *auctoritas* of Shakespeare over his successors, something that should give us pause when ploughing through those dismally flat blank verse versions (Fitzgerald, Mandelbaum) so fashionable today. On the other hand, he is describing an ideal rather than a reality when he talks about the contrasting "linguistic-cultural distance to the Homeric" as being "at once talismanic and liberating." Too often we are far more conscious of the other influence that he mentions, "the climate of culture and taste in which the translations were commissioned."

Steiner's anthology reflects, as it was bound to, and with uncanny fidelity, the world of each translation rather than that of Homer himself. This fidelity is not restricted to poetics. Pope, for instance, gagged on what he called "the extravagant Fiction of a Horse speaking" until he could provide a precedent (Balaam's ass) out of Holy Writ; he also censored Penelope's blunt words to the treacherous maid Melantho (well and bluntly rendered by Hobbes) on the grounds of indelicacy. Nowadays the complaints are more likely to be against prim academicism shackling the translator's free spirit: this, surprisingly, has been the main objection to Richmond Lattimore's famous version. Students have been heard to mutter that "meter is fascist." It is easy to damn what you've never been taught.

Yet Homer continues to find large audiences regardless, and we have to ask ourselves why. Steiner's thesis about the *Iliad*—that it combines "an idealized yet also unflinching vision of masculinity," subtly homoerotic, with an acute sense of pathos, what Virgil called *lacrimae rerum*, and Day Lewis translated as "tears at the heart of things"—will probably catch as much flak as a similar theory about football did, but it may be on the mark. There can be no doubt, on the other hand, about what Andrew Lang well described as "the surge and thunder of the *Odyssey*": it is *the* great sea-epic, of voyage and homecoming, archetypal in its music and imagery, timeless in its emotional force.

It is also, as we have seen, keyed to personal relationships in a way that the *Iliad* is not. Steiner, again, gets it right: "As literary modes grow more introspective, as perceptions come to dwell on psychological motivations and the dramas of privacy, it is the *Odyssey* which looks pivotal. Here lie the germs of the novel." But not the novel itself. The *Odyssey* is a poem—a poem that was composed (with whatever combination of oral and written material) to be delivered aloud, whether by rhapsode at the court of the Athenian tyrant Peisistratos, or today, two and a half millennia later, in a rich, dramatic and infinitely resourceful one-man recital by the great Ian McKellen.

In comparing Robert Fagles' translation to those of his predecessors, the first thing we should stress, and by far the most important, is that this is an *Odyssey* consciously crafted for performance. The wheel has indeed come full circle. Just as it was for centuries an article of faith that Homer wrote his poems, so, virtually since the Renaissance, all trans-


**NEW AUTHORS**
**PUBLISH YOUR WORK**
*All subjects considered:*
Fiction, Biography, Poetry, Religion, Childrens;
*AUTHORS WORLDWIDE INVITED.*
*Write or send your manuscript to:*
**MINERVA PRESS**
2 Old Brompton Road • London SW7 3DQ, England

**GOVERNMENT FORECLOSED HOMES FOR**
pennies on $1. Delinquent Tax,
Repo's, REO's. Your Area.
Call Toll Free: 1-800-898-4377
Ext. H-4377 for current listings

**The Progressive Populist**
Heartland news and views with **Jim Hightower, Molly Ivins, Ralph Nader, Jesse Jackson, Eugene McCarthy, Norman Solomon,** other plutocrat-pluckers and the best of the alternative press from around the country.
*We deflate pompous plutocrats.*
**Only $18 for 12 issues.**
For a **Free Sample** Call
toll-free **1-800-205-7067.**




LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lations, even the best, have been composed to be read. But Fagles' Homer is accompanied by an audiotape version, and this is not an electronic gimmick, it is an integral part of this translation's purpose: to recreate, for those who have ears to hear, the ambience and the impact of the rhapsode's magic, his voice, like that of Odysseus, "holding them spellbound down the shadowed halls." Its spoken force is what gives Fagles' version its unique quality. We are caught, like Coleridge's wedding-guest, by this other ancient mariner: we cannot choose but hear.

A good way to demonstrate this, I think, is to compare a passage, as rendered by Fagles, with the version in Lattimore, still the most compelling modern literary translation—that is, one aimed by a desk-scholar at readers, in a basically silent transaction. Let's go for bravura action. Odysseus, with strung bow, is about to wreak vengeance on the wooers. This is Lattimore:

> He spoke, and steered a bitter arrow
> against Antinous.
> He was on the point of lifting up a fine
> two-handled
> goblet of gold, and had it in his hands,
> and was moving it
> so as to drink of the wine, and in his heart
> there was no thought
> of death. For who would think that one
> man, alone in a company
> of many men at their feasting, though he
> were a very strong one,
> would ever inflict death upon him and dark
> doom? But Odysseus,
> aiming at this man, struck him in the throat
> with an arrow,
> and clean through the soft part of the neck
> the point was driven.
> He slumped away to one side, and out of
> his stricken hand fell
> the goblet, and up and through his nostrils
> there burst a thick jet
> of mortal blood, and with a thrust of his
> foot he kicked back
> the table from him, so that all the good
> food was scattered
> on the ground, bread and baked meats
> together.

And this is Fagles:

> With that he trained a stabbing arrow on
> Antinous ...
> just lifting a gorgeous golden loving-cup in
> his hands,
> just tilting the two-handled goblet back to
> his lips,
> about to drain the wine—and slaughter the
> last thing
> on the suitor's mind: who could dream that
> one foe
> in that crowd of feasters, however great his
> power,
> would bring down death on himself, and
> black doom?
>
> But Odysseus aimed and shot Antinous
> square in the throat
> and the point went stabbing clean through
> the soft neck and out—
> and off to the side he pitched the cup
> dropped from his grasp
> as the shaft sank home, and the man's
> life-blood came spurting
> out his nostrils—
> thick red jets—
> a sudden thrust of his foot—
> he kicked away the table—
> food showered across the floor,
> the bread and meats soaked in a swirl of
> bloody filth.

Some differences are obvious, some are not. Lattimore sticks closer to the Greek, retaining both line-equivalence and, more dangerously, basic sentence-structure. Fagles uses a shorter line, based on blank verse but springier, more expansive and flexible, while his syntax is very much his own. But the crux of the matter is this: any trained actor or reader, confronted with the two versions, will tell you at once that Lattimore is just about impossible to declaim effectively. The prosody is flat, often ambiguous, at times downright awkward. The syntax ignores spoken periodicity, and the rhythm of natural breathing; there is no sense of audible shaping or control. But Fagles goes at his job quite differently. Clauses are beautifully paced for breathing, the language is sharp and crisp, even the punctuation is used creatively, as though it were a musical score (note the staccato effect of jetting blood, that convulsive kick at the table). McKellen has a marked script here, and he tears into it with justifiable relish. The result is riveting.

In his translator's postscript, Fagles congratulates his many acknowledged helpers for never asking the inevitable question: Why another *Odyssey*? "Each has understood, it seems, that if Homer was a performer, his translator might aim to be one as well; and no two performances of the same work—surely not of musical composition, so probably not of a work of language either—will ever be the same. The timbre and tempo of each will be distinct, let alone its deeper resonance, build, and thrust." The musical parallel seems to me exactly right. A translator's choices may be wider, the chances of success more elusive; but the endeavor is identical.

In the last resort, as Eliot said, "there is no competition—/There is only the fight to recover what has been lost / And found and lost again and again: and now, under conditions / That seem unpropitious." We each make our own *Odyssey*. I began with Andrew Lang's *Tales of Troy and Greece*, moved to Butcher & Lang's Victorian Bible-cadenced prose, and then, with infinite joy, discovered Homer's Greek, swift, muscular, formulaic. But something of the English tradition, acquired so early, always stayed deep in my appreciation. Now I have Robert Fagles to thank for a new and precious gift. He has let me hear the rhapsode work his magic, and held me spellbound in those shadowy halls.

PETER GREEN's translation of Apollonios Rhodios's *Argonautika* will be published this spring by the University of California Press. An audiotape version, read by Juliet Stevenson, has been issued by Highbridge.

# *The Writer as Princess*

**BY EUGEN WEBER**

## Enchantress: Marthe Bibesco and Her World by Christine Sutherland

**(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 316 pp., $30)**

Readers of *War and Peace* may remember that the first words of the great novel are spoken in French. The Tolstoi of the 1860s declared himself indifferent to the existence of "bureaucrats, merchants, seminarists and mujiks." He wanted to describe "the attitude and the life of high society families," and so a lot of the conversations that take place in his monumental work are in French or English, or switch from Russian to one of these more fashionable languages.

The Princess Bibesco, whose life and work Christine Sutherland traces in an intriguing book, was no Tolstoi; her writings are neither as voluminous nor as well-remembered. But she, too, was an aristocrat, and part of a society that oper-



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ated more naturally in the languages of culture than in those of less exalted folk. Bourgeois, merchants and the rest were as indifferent to her as to the Russian count; and if she cast sympathetic eyes on Romanian peasants (whom she described in French), it was more for their folkloric or sentimental value, as a chorus of supernumeraries for classier protagonists.

Marthe Lahovary was born in 1886 in Romania; "a small country," Sutherland tells us, "on the edge of the Western world." It may be a matter of perspective but, to me, Romania, like Tolstoi's Russia, and Yeltsin's too, is part of a non-Western world: Western in the culture of the cultured classes, profoundly other in its traditions and its ways. The Lahovarys were not "new bourgeoisie," as Sutherland would have it, not bureaucrats or merchants, nor jumped-up peasants' offspring or the sons of priests. They may have been, once, hangers-on of Phanariot princes sent by the Turks to rule Moldavia and Wallachia in the eighteenth century, but by the nineteenth century they had become great landowners and great state officials—generals, ministers, intermarried with their once-protectors and with other Romanian and European nobility.

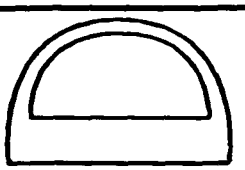
Marthe's father, Jean, was schooled in France and had married a Mavrocordato, the descendant of an illustrious clan. Marthe herself, educated almost exclusively in French, was fluent in German and English, like most of her kind. Romanian, "used to communicate with servants and the villagers" on the family estate, came last, after she was 11. Marthe's difficult, neurotic mother resented her because she was not a boy. Her father loved her. Who would not? Vital and amusing, she had huge green eyes, magnificent red hair, "the voice of Scheherazade," a wicked sense of humor. She loved cats, but she loved books more. Widely and ever more widely read, she could be captivating, seductive or simply fun.

And for a moment—for years, in fact—it looked as if all this would be wasted. At 16 years of age, Marthe was married to a handsome prince, a descendant of a family that ruled Wallachia not so long before. Seven years older, George Bibesco was shallow, selfish, sensual, spoiled, a charming gambler and womanizer, and every girl's dream. Married in 1902, the girl was raped as so many rich young brides were raped, on the Orient Express on her wedding night. Marthe seems to have concluded that physical pleasures were "a slightly obscene and overrated passtime," and she preferred intellectual pursuits. Her negative view of sex was to be modified, but not her view of intellectual pursuits. Proust, whom Marthe knew and about whom she published a book that Sutherland dismisses as slight when it is not—Proust described reading as the noblest distraction. That could be meant either as entertainment or as diversion from reality. Marthe read.

Hardship is easier to bear when you are filthy rich. Books were Marthe's company and her conversation. While George indulged his penchant for fast cars and fast women, the young bride seems to have spent most of her time on a mountain estate with her mother-in-law, born Countess of Caraman-Chimay, who found Bucharest provincial and dull. When not reading to the old lady or partnering her in croquet on the lawn, Marthe inhabited "the fairyland world of French culture," wrote and walked through the marvelous mountainscape.

There was friendship with another, equally frustrated princess: Marie of Edinburgh, wife of the heir to the Romanian throne. There was an even livelier friendship with her expatriate Bibesco cousins, friends of everybody who was anybody, harbingers of Parisian wonders. The great thing about being a Romanian diplomat, as one of them put it, was that one did not have to spend time in Romania. She visited them in Paris, met Proust


MILAH PRESS congratulates Professor Daniel Jonah Goldhagen on his vigorous response to the critics of ***HITLER AND HIS WILLING EXECUTIONERS.*** This book should be on the shelf of all readers of history!




There are striking similarities between Goldhagen's central thesis and the view of the germans described by two-time Pulitzer Prize winner, Ben Hecht. Hecht published his ***GUIDE FOR THE BEDEVILLED*** in 1944. It was reprinted by MILAH PRESS in 1996. Compare the following paragraphs:

"The Germans sat at desks and held conferences, discussing the most economical way to murder Jews. The Germans at those desks were not fantastic Germans. They were usual Germans...At these desks were all the German students and leaders and public citizens whom we will see again when, as tourists, we visit the streets of conquered Berlin." (Hecht, *Guide for the Bedevilled.* p. 142 1944)

"The first task in restoring the perpetrators to the center of our understanding of the Holocaust is to restore to them their identities, grammatically by using not the passive but the active voice in order to ensure that they, the actors, are not absent from their own deeds (as in, "five hundred Jews were killed in city X on date Y"), and by eschewing convenient, yet often inappropriate and obfuscating labels, like "Nazis" and "SS men," and calling them what they were, "Germans." The most appropriate, indeed the only appropriate *general* proper name for the Germans who perpetrated the Holocaust is "Germans." (Goldhagen, *Hitler and His Willing Executioners*, pp. 5-6. 1996).

Another excellent companion work is the groundbreaking research of David Morrison into the papers of Jewish leaders at the time of the Holocaust. Only this book gives the reader a complete understanding of what was done and what was not done to rescue Jews. Morrison's ***HEROES, ANTIHEROES AND THE HOLOCAUST*** drew this response from Nobel Prize winner Elie Wiesel: ***"Read this book. It deals with American Jewish attitudes during the dark period of Night. I found it informative, disturbing, stimulating. And necessary."***

**ORDER ONE BOOK FOR $24.95, ANY TWO BOOKS FOR $45.00,**
**OR ALL THREE BOOKS FOR ONLY $60.00.**
**Add $4.50 for shipping and handling.**
**CALL *1-800-237-0968* WITH YOUR VISA OR MASTERCARD INFORMATION**




LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and their other friends. "My daughter was one year old. I was sixteen years older." There was even a trip to Persia, organized by Jean Lahovary, then Foreign Minister, who felt that Marthe needed a change and made the 25-year-old George head of a mission to the Shah. Isfahan, Shiraz, Constantinople too, were going to inspire Marthe's first book, encouraged by French friends, written in the Carpathians, published by Hachette to instant acclaim.

Romania was a rich country inhabited by lots of poor people. The economic system might be described as feudalism tempered by rebellion. "These people," wrote Marthe in her diary about the villagers on the Bibesco estate, "have been so mistreated for centuries that they have no aspirations left—just survival." She was almost right. In 1907, a great peasant rebellion set the Romanian countryside on fire and was crushed by heavy military intervention. That was the year in which Marthe finished the manuscript of *Les Huit Paradis*, whose publication in 1908 brought her the fame that she craved. In "Babel on the Seine," the 22-year-old "princess of letters" could fulfill her dreams, literary and social. Reviews glowed, so did the Bibesco emeralds, so did the eyes of admirers and of feminine rivals. Marthe was covered with paeans and prizes. The Kronprinz Wilhelm, son and heir of Kaiser Wilhelm II, fell victim to her eyes and her conversation, invited her to Berlin and, when a rainstorm ruined Marthe's hat, sent six in its stead "with compliments and excuses." Proust, and Cocteau, and that saintly society priest, the Abbé Mugnier, sang her praises. The Sultan of Zanzibar, who glimpsed her at a ball "wearing a satin rose gown and her emeralds," sent her a basket of roses "among which lay a magnificent ruby-and-diamond bracelet."

From then on, social and literary success went hand in hand, the former stimulating the latter. France boasted other literary princesses, notably the equally beautiful Anna Brancovan, Comtesse de Noailles, a lyrical, elegiac poet whom Sutherland presents as jealous of her younger cousin; but, for a while, none as likely to catch men's eyes. And prose, though it takes longer to read, is more accessible than verse. Marthe's prose certainly was. It can be tempting to patronize a writer who has not made it into *The Oxford Companion to French Literature* as Noailles did. But Marthe Bibesco's writings are well-crafted, evocative, elegant. She did not want to be categorized as a woman of letters, much less a bluestocking intellectual, but she would be a true professional writer; so much so that, under the pen name of Lucile Decaux, she produced a number of potboilers that sold even better than her more presentable works. An uncle was shocked to hear that she was not, like a lady, paying to get into print, but receiving payments from her publishers. She tried to explain that publishing without returns spoiled the market for other writers and left her uncertain of the quality of her own work.

George picked up syphilis; Marthe found an *amant de coeur* in Prince Charles-Louis de Beauvau-Craon; she contemplated divorce but dismissed the

## *Rara Avis in Terris*

*For Helen*

Hawks are in the ascendant. Just look about.
Cormorants, ravens, jailbirds of ominous wing
Befoul the peace, their caws
raised in some summoning
To an eviscerating cause,
Some jihad, some rash all-get-out
Crusade, leaving the field all gore and guano
Justified in hysterical soprano

By balding buzzards who brandish the smart bomb,
The fractured atom in their unclipped talons.
Ruffling with all the pride
of testosteronic felons,
They storm the airwaves with implied
Threats and theatrical aplomb
Or cruise the sky with delta stealth and gelid
Chestsful of combat-decorative fruit salad.

It's the same in the shady groves of academe:
Cold eye and primitive beak and calloused foot
Conjunctive to destroy
all things of high repute,
Whole epics, Campion's songs, Tolstoi,
Euclid and logic's enthymeme,
As each man strives and focuses his labor
Industriously to deconstruct his neighbor.

And that's not the worst of it; there are the Bacchae,
The ladies' auxiliary of the raptor clan
With their bright cutlery,
sororal to a man.
And feeling peckish, they foresee
An avian banquet in the sky,
Feasting off dead white European males,
Or local living ones if all else fails.

But where are the mild monogamous lovebirds,
Parakeets, homing pigeons, sundry doves,
Beringed, bewitching signs
of the first, greatest loves
Eros or Agape gently defines?
God's for the ark's small flocks and herds,
Or Venus incarnate as that quasi-queen
Of France known as Diane de la Poitrine.

They are here, my dear, they are here in the marble air,
According to the micro-Mosaic law,
Miraculously aloft
above that flood and flaw
Where Noah darkly plies his craft.
Lightly an olive branch they bear,
Its deathless leafage emblematic of
A quarter-century of faultless love.

**ANTHONY HECHT**



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# ARE THESE REALLY MY PEOPLE? AM I TRULY AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN?

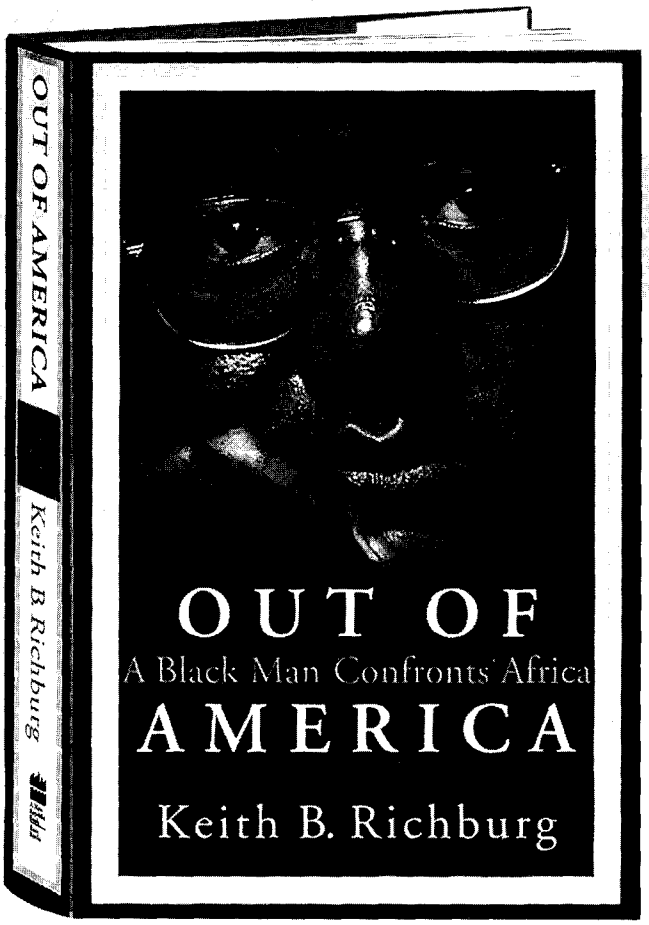
"*Thank God my nameless ancestor, brought across the ocean in chains and leg irons, made it out alive. Thank God I am an American.*" So speaks award-winning journalist Keith Richburg, a black American who spent three years in Africa seeking answers to the chaos now sweeping the continent of his ancestors. In the most powerful, controversial—and most important—book of the year, Richburg confronts Africa's petty tyranny and senseless violence to forever shatter the perception of Africa as a promised land where blacks walk tall, free, and proud among their brothers.

"A brilliant, electrifying story of one man's hard-won liberation."
**—John Hockenberry, NBC News**

"Black America has always imagined Africa like the adopted child imagines the birth parent. Keith Richburg marches through that dream and finds that he was an American all along."
**—Shelby Steele, author of *The Content of Our Character***

"Richburg has carved out for himself a place among America's writers of the first rank."
**—Ellis Cose, author of *The Rage of a Privileged Class* and *Color Blind***

"*Out of America* is a book we've needed for a long time and Keith Richburg delivers. . . . A courageous book that is at once moving and disturbing—an African journey of the heart that I will not soon forget."
**—David Lamb, national correspondent, *Los Angeles Times*, and author of *The Africans***




At bookstores now or call 1-800-331-3761

A New Republic Book

BasicBooks
*A Division of* HarperCollins*Publishers*
*Also available from* HarperCollins*CanadaLtd*
http://www.harpercollins.com


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thought in fear of social consequences; she became Charles-Louis's mistress to console him for not being his wife, and commuted between Paris and Bucharest as one would today between New York and Boston. The First World War hardly checked her shuttling, but it brought one lover more: Lieutenant Colonel Christopher Birdwood Thomson, part of the British effort to make Romania join the allies. Thomson stupidly stored British intelligence files in Marthe's country house, and German intelligence burned the house down. Britain and France assured Romania that, if it entered the war, they would "supply and support Romanian armies on all fronts." A look at the map could show that this was nonsense, but Romania entered the war nevertheless in 1915, and was beaten hollow. When not in London, Paris or Geneva, Marthe worked heroically in a hospital. She was protected by German friends and by French ones, too. The Romanian crown jewels sought safe haven in St. Petersburg, where they were lost forever. Marthe's valuables were taken to Paris by French diplomats.

When the war ended, Marthe moved to Paris (more or less), where her writing brought more fame, more fortune (George cost a lot) and financial independence. Paris, Princess Bibesco reminds us in *Catherine Paris*, is the place where one is best able to live without happiness. Her novels—"magical descriptions," charming and still readable today—were published with first printings in the tens of thousands (80,000 for *Catherine Paris* in 1927). More lovers and admirers crowded the stage: King Alfonso XIII of Spain; Sir Philip Sassoon, "politician, millionaire and aesthete, whose hobbies were entertaining and airplanes"; Henry de Jouvenel, Colette's ex-husband and definitely not, as Sutherland claims, "from small town provincial nobility," since the family claimed descent from Roman Orsinis and from Juvénal des Ursins.

The lives of the rich and famous allow little respite. 1929 proved particularly fateful. Labour had won the British elections, Christopher Thomson (who had loved her for fourteen years) became Minister for Air and Lord Thomson of Cardington. One afternoon, while enjoying tea on the terrace of the House of Lords, she saw a strikingly handsome white-haired man, the Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald. Weekends at Chequers followed. Thomson died in the crash of his brainchild, an airship that went down over Beauvais; Marthe was shattered, but friends stood by. A little later, when George, as enthusiastic a flyer as he was a driver, crashed in flames near Allahabad after a collision with a particularly large vulture, Marthe called Enid Bagnold, the novelist, in London, whose husband was head of Reuters. Reuters' Benares offices soon reassured the princess in Paris. George would be all right.

Lesser disasters followed. The Great Depression hovers vaguely, but doesn't really impinge on Marthe's world. What does is that her friend Queen Marie's reprehensible son Carol returns to Romania as King. Marthe had known Carol as a lad and never liked him. Few who knew him did. He was shy, ill-humored, arrogant, irresponsible. Carol had deserted his post during the war to run away with another man's wife; but the army liked him "in spite of his wartime desertion." In 1930, he was reinstated as Carol II. In 1931, Romania, like other countries, underwent a crisis of public and private finance. Banks crashed, an economy on the rocks produced social and political unrest.

Happily, the "draconian currency controls" instituted in 1932 did not cramp the Bibescos' style. Marthe wrote for *The Saturday Evening Post* and for *L'Illustration*, put her book contracts on the back burner to earn ready cash and earned it. One of her novels became a film with Danielle Darrieux; Lucile Decaux's romances sold well. Her Romanian identity grew more shadowy. George Calinescu's great *Dictionary of Romanian Literature*, for instance, describes her as a French-language author who also published Romanian versions of some of her books.

Marthe, who had developed a taste for flying, preferably in private planes, traveled to London, where, in Downing Street, MacDonald fed her on grouse the King had shot himself and sent over from Balmoral; to Constantinople, where the French Ambassador (her host in Athens a few years before) "smoothed the path of her research in local archives"; and accompanied George, now president of the International Aeronautical Federation (IAF), to a gigantic pheasant shoot in Bohemia, where most of Europe's *Almanach de Gotha* blazed away at assorted small game ("I hated it!").

Bibescos and Blériots sailed for New York, stayed at the Waldorf-Astoria, dined with the Vanderbilts, lunched with the Guggenheims and Lindberghs, had tea with the Roosevelts at the White House. Meanwhile, Marthe and MacDonald had fallen into each other's arms; summer in London, Marthe at the Ritz as usual, dinner in Downing Street: "I shall never forget his kiss.... I remained in his arms for a long time." She was 47, he was twenty years older. Their correspondence ended only with his death. When Edward VIII abdicated in 1936, "The new King is a pet," MacDonald informed her.

In 1938, after the Germans marched into Austria, the Bibescos joined Alfonso XIII, now in exile, to watch Mussolini receive Hitler in Rome; then they attended the IAF congress in Berlin, where Marthe met the Kronprinz, twenty-nine years after her visit of 1909. At the IAF banquet, Marthe sat at Göring's right and George at the right of Frau Göring. The Marshal insisted on showing Marthe all his rings, one by one, then had the Bibescos and the Londonderrys to dine at Karinhall the next day, receiving them in very tight green *lederhosen*. "He obviously does not mind looking ridiculous." Vulgarity was worse than bad politics.

George died of cancer in 1941, and Marthe momentarily regretted his presence a little. He had remained a nuisance to the end. War, long expected, rolled first around Romania, then over it. Sutherland, who gets Romanian politics wrong, as she gets the French, writes of a Bucharest overrun by German soldiers and of a country stripped bare by them. Yet the Germans were practically invisible in Bucharest, most of them were in Russia. So were Romanian troops, not exactly "forced by their German masters to fight on the Russian front." The Romanians paid for this in 1944, when changing sides did not prevent Russians from stripping the country bare, as the Germans never did. When, the war over, a British Air Vice-Marshal arranged for Marthe to be flown to Paris by the RAF, she found the Ritz shabby, hot water rationed, mere whiting on the menu and paper napkins on the table: a far cry from Romanian conditions.

France would get better, but Romania worse. Family estates and other properties were confiscated, Marthe's daughter and son-in-law were arrested (and only released into exile in 1956). By lecture tours, alimentary writing, selling off jewelry and paintings, Marthe managed to keep herself and her tribe in something like the state to which she had been accustomed. The house that she bought in Cornwall was too large and too expensive to run, but "she liked grandeur and her standards had always been high. She wasn't going to capitulate." She didn't. She died as she had always wished, of heart failure, while comfortable in her armchair. It was 1973 and she was 87.

One might ask what such a life, appar-



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ently futile, anachronistic, cossetted and unrepresentative of the world around, was worth. Yet if Marthe took pleasure, she gave pleasure too, and did no apparent harm. Her story, and the story of her kind, could be used to justify the Communist takeover of a country exploited by few with little concern for the many. Yet four decades of communism left the land in more of a shambles than centuries of feudalism had achieved. Indifferent self-indulgence had tolerated poverty, but also modest comforts. Alleged redistributive justice, by contrast, steamrolled all alike. Marthe made the best of things. So did a lot of less fortunate Romanians, as long as they had the chance. Sutherland may be right not to have raised the question.

Still, a biographer that raises few questions provides little food for thought. This is where Sutherland stumbles. The evidence that would flesh out relations, readings, writings, is scant; that which pertains to ideas and feelings largely absent. Marthe's writings receive bitsy attention, her mind practically none. The background of her publications lacks contours. Of course, the story of Marthe, Princess Bibesco, who dabbled in the society, politics and literary waters of several countries and several generations, tells itself, and Sutherland rides on it. But an author owes more to her subject and her reader. Sutherland likes Marthe, but she cannot, or she does not bother to, conceive Marthe's world. The complexity of the Enchantress is suggested, that of her context is not.

"The attitude and the life of high society families," as Tolstoi put it in the preface that he wrote, but never published, to *War and Peace*, used to have consequences that went far beyond the bounds of decorative elites. What social, economic, cultural and political roles did this international, supranational, cosmopolitan aristocracy play in their home countries and abroad? We know little about the pre-1914 world of expatriates. They were not refugees, except from dull surroundings or oppressive families. They were seekers after lives less limited than they could lead at home. And we know less about their finances. How did they shift the capital involved in conspicuous consumption, display or simple everyday living, which was seldom simple? What was their influence? They obviously carried cultural artifacts and fashions from West to East; but also displayed dress, manners and peculiar doings to neighbors and inferiors at home. Agents of cultural cross-pollination, they must have diffused some "modern" urban ways, manners, aspirations, by their example.

Moreover, families such as the Brancovans and Bibescos, controlling most of the capital of undeveloped local and national economies, or the Palffys and the Esterhazys, provided the first line of investors and entrepreneurs responsible for industrial development and "modernization." George Bibesco, Sutherland tells us, owned and ran a cement factory. Perhaps the idle rich were not as idle as they have been depicted. But their activities mattered in more ways than one. The age of rentiers, living mostly on revenues from land, real estate and government bonds, has gone with the revolutions, depressions and inflations of the twentieth century. So has a certain type of culture that was associated with, and often subsidized by, them.

Biographers do what they can with the materials they have, and Sutherland may have done her best. She has certainly pressed her research among those who knew Marthe, and among Marthe's papers. But when it comes to the historical background, too many facts are simply wrong. Politics in France and in Romania are misdated or misstated, political figures and activities misrepresented, names are mistranslated (the religious name of Jeanne Bibesco, *Mère Bénie de Jésus*, means not "Holy Mother of God" but "Mother Blessed by Jesus"), sites are misplaced (the Bibesco cousins' domain at Corcova was not in Bessarabia but at the other end of the country), designations misused (the man in charge of a British school is not a "principal" but a "headmaster"). And personalities whom one expected to meet make no appearance, such as Maurice Barrès, the lover of Anna de Noailles who, by some accounts, suggested Marthe's first book, or Paul Morand, married to a Romanian, a friend of Marthe's friends and close relations, and the French minister to Bucharest in 1943-44.

This sort of thing aggravates specialists more than it affects innocent civilians. The history of Alexander or Napoleon can provide entertainment and instruction when dates are vague and place names wrong, and the best-known biography in the Christian world offers no real dates and few exact locations. No one will find Marthe Bibesco's life less savory because a riot has been misdated or an estate mislocated. Sutherland serves this sort of reader well and, despite irritations, I enjoyed her tale. For all the rich desserts however, there is not enough here to chew on.

EUGEN WEBER is the Joan Palevsky Professor of Modern European History at UCLA.

*Rid your home or plant of pests and vermin with the ...*

**Rodelsonix IX still only $69.95***

***But read this ad for an even better deal!***

•Rodelsonix IX
*is an industrial-type unit, the most powerful you can get. It's a humane, clean, and effective system to get rid of your pests—once and for all.*

Mice, rats, roaches, bats, fleas, spiders and other pests make life miserable at home or at the plant. Old-fashioned poisons get rid of them—but only temporarily, and they are a hazard to you and to your pets. *Rodelsonix IX* works on a different principle: It delivers a tremendous blast of ultra-sound—inaudible to you and to your pets—that disrupts the nervous system of those pests. They'll leave your home within a few weeks—never to return. There is nothing to prepare, nothing to set up—no poison and no mess. Pests just disappear.

*Rodelsonix IX* is a powerful industrial-type unit that protects up to 10,000 sq. ft. (70,000 cu. ft.). It has six variable pitch and "loudness" settings. You can even adjust it to keep larger pests, such as raccoons, pigeons, or rabbits at bay. Since it's clad in an enamel steel housing you can even use it outdoors.

*Rodelsonix IX* has been designed and engineered to work in restaurants, factories and food processing plants. It's that powerful and that effective. We can still offer this top-of-the-line industrial unit for just $69.95. But here's an even better deal: ***Buy two for just $139.90, and we'll send you a third one, with our compliments—absolutely FREE!*** Get rid and stay rid of those nasty pests once and for all. Get the best—get *Rodelsonix IX* today!

FOR FASTEST SERVICE, ORDER
**TOLL FREE (800) 797-7367**
**24 Hours a Day, 7 days a week.**

Please give order **#1007C625** for Rodelsonix IX(s). We need daytime phone # for all orders. Add $4.95 standard shipping/insurance charge (plus sales tax for California delivery). You have 30-day return and one-year warranty. We do not refund shipping charges.

**For Customer Service and for wholesale/premium quantity orders, please call 415-543-6675.**

*since 1967*
**haverhills®**
185 Berry St., San Francisco, CA 94107



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# BOSTON DIARIST

## Patriot games

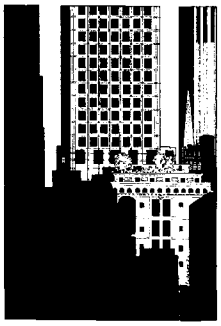
MY BEST FRIEND'S GRANDFATHER tells this story. Graduating from law school in the 1930s, he was the first Jew hired by a white-shoe Boston firm. A few years later he made partner. And a few years after that, he suggested hiring an associate named Fahy. "I'm terribly sorry," the senior partner explained, thinking that perhaps my friend's grandfather had drawn the wrong conclusions from his own employment, "but this firm does not hire Irish Catholics."

THAT WAS BOSTON A HALF CENtury ago. The senior partner knew the firm could assimilate a few Jews without threatening its WASP-essence. But if it opened its doors to the city's vast Irish population, it would be overrun. My friend's grandfather understood what was at stake as well and connived to ensure that it would be overrun. Jews today spend considerable energy eulogizing the black-Jewish alliance, but in Boston, where blacks were relatively few, it was the Irish who opened up the WASP sanctums and allowed Jews to become full members of the city's newly democratized institutions.

I REMEMBERED THIS STORY WHEN I heard about the controversy over a new stadium for the Super Bowl-defeated New England Patriots. It's a conflict drenched in age-old Boston antagonisms: Irish v. WASP, government v. industry, Democrat v. Republican. The Patriots' owner, a member of the city's traditionally WASP-dominated business elite, wants to build a stadium on a swath of dock land in Southie, the solar plexus of Irish Catholic Boston. The men who run City Hall, many of them from the South Boston housing projects that produce politicians like western Pennsylvania produces quarterbacks, have risen to oppose the plan. Like their forefathers, who used City Hall to combat the WASP business and professional cliques to which they were denied access, they have vowed to defend their neighborhoods from development they can't control. Stymied by the city's Democratic pols, the owner has allied himself with William Weld, the Republican governor, the sort of Brahmin who sent Boston's Irish flocking to the Democratic Party in the first place.

EXCEPT FOR ONE DIFFERENCE. THE Pats' owner, Robert Kraft, is a Jew. And in resting comfortably on the WASP rather than the Irish side of this venerable Boston divide, he's no communal anomaly. As the old WASP elite has evaporated, Boston's Jews have inherited its sensibilities. The Irish, by and large, have not. It's not that the Irish haven't moved into the middle class; many have. But working-class Irish neighborhoods remain in Charlestown, Dorchester and South Boston. The city's working-class Jewish neighborhoods, on the other hand, have all disappeared.

THERE ARE VARIOUS POSSIBLE REAsons for this. Jews were less bound to the city because they were less likely to work for the city; without a network of parochial schools, they were more likely to relocate when public schools declined. And then there was the Boston Banks Urban Renewal Group. In the late 1960s, in the wake of urban unrest, prominent Boston bankers and social engineers embarked upon a scheme to help blacks buy homes. But they offered them mortgages only in Mattapan, where Boston's older, poorer Jews lived. By the mid-1970s, as Hillel Levine and Larry Harmon document in *Tragedy of Good Intentions: The Death of an American Jewish Community*, the Jews of Mattapan had left for the suburbs.



AS IT HAPPENED, JEWISH FLIGHT coincided with Boston's great class struggle over the court order to integrate city schools through forced busing. Thus, when the ideals of Boston's liberal, largely suburban elite smashed head-first into the white working-class instinct for communal preservation, that urban working class contained virtually no Jews. In the white working-class neighborhoods that watched their children bused across town, the trauma spawned a populist, anti-liberal backlash. The politics of this backlash center on the protection of neighborhoods from the twin threats of encroaching black poverty and crime, and of rapacious, community-destroying development. And that is why, years before Pat Buchanan discovered Wall Street-bashing, Boston elections pitted suburban pro-business social liberals against culturally conservative city-dwellers suspicious of unfettered development. Such battles have taken place between the two parties (William Weld v. John Silber for governor in 1990) and within the Democratic Party (Michael Dukakis v. Ed King for governor in 1978). But since Boston's Jews no longer live in neighborhoods threatened by liberal social engineering and corporate development, their politics now resemble the old WASP ideology of economic and social libertarianism, and place them in opposition to the Irish.

AMONG THE JEWISH SUBURBANITES I grew up with in the 1970s and 1980s, distrust of the Irish was stronger than distrust of WASPs. As with much liberal prejudice, it was disguised as opposition to racism. In junior high, a lefty music teacher taught us to sing Tom Lehrer's antinuclear folk jingle, "Who's Next?" But we gave Lehrer's patronizing last line ("We'll try to stay serene and calm, when Alabama gets the bomb") our own local spin, replacing Alabama with South Boston.

AND BOSTON BEING BOSton, these tribal prejudices were inseparable from sports. In our eyes, there were three Irish teams—the Red Sox, the Bruins and the Patriots—and their management was deemed racist and incompetent. And then there were Red Auerbach's Celtics—progressive (the first team with a black player and the first with a black coach), shrewd (evidenced by the legendary deal that brought Robert Parish and Kevin McHale to Boston in exchange for the hapless Joe Barry Carroll) and (the name notwithstanding) Jewish. So when Bob Kraft bought the lowly Pats in 1994, and the team became a contender, you could start to feel the murmurings of cultural ownership ("He moved the game against Jacksonville so it wouldn't conflict with Yom Kippur!" an acquaintance exclaimed). And then, when he proposed transferring the team from a decrepit stadium in remote Foxboro to the heart of the city, our side cheered again. I'm not qualified to evaluate the protests of South Boston activists that a stadium would bring more traffic and hooliganism than it would bring jobs but few Jewish supporters of the newly Judaicized Pats would feel the consequences either way.

FOR A MOMENT AS I WATCHED THE Patriots lose Super Bowl XXXI, it struck me that perhaps this cultural competition would be overtaken by events on the field. You know what they say about victory having a thousand fathers but failure being an orphan. After all, who really wants to see their group identity reflected in a team that's still never won it all, a team plagued by self-doubt and a permanent inferiority complex, a team doomed to defeat, heartache, tragedy? Oh yeah, the Irish and the Jews.

**PETER BEINART**

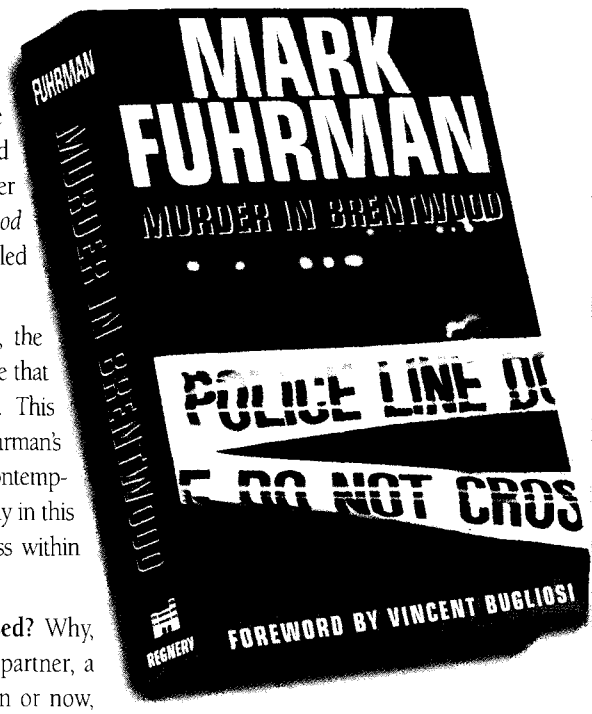


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# Mark Fuhrman

## *finally breaks his silence . . .*

After two years of virtual silence, Detective Mark Fuhrman has written the first nothing-to-lose, no-holds-barred account of the O.J. Simpson murder investigation. *Murder in Brentwood* unveils fact after never-before-revealed fact.




Fuhrman discloses, for instance, the one unimpeachable piece of evidence that could have put O.J. away for life. This evidence was corroborated by Fuhrman's partner and also by Fuhrman's contemporaneous notes—reprinted exclusively in this book—which were given to his boss within hours of the murders.

**Why wasn't this evidence used?** Why, for that matter, wasn't Fuhrman's partner, a man with no cloud over him, then or now, ever called to testify?

The "mystery" detective's name? Brad Roberts. You've probably never even heard of him, yet he can corroborate virtually everything Fuhrman saw (and much more). Why was he never even called as a witness? You will be disgusted with the answer.

> *Even if Fuhrman's testimony were in question, why wouldn't the prosecution immediately move to corroborate his damning story by using the testimony of Fuhrman's partner?*

*Murder in Brentwood* focuses on the O.J. case, but you will also learn a side of Mark Fuhrman few people know.

**A saint? Hardly. A good detective? Without question.** Here's a man who was awakened at 1:05 a.m., called to a double homicide scene, did absolutely nothing wrong during the entire investigation—did absolutely everything *right*—yet had his life ruined because of it.

Given the intense pre-publication interest in this book, and the already confirmed TV appearances by the author (with Diane Sawyer, Oprah, Larry King, and many others), we expect book shortages in many stores. Most bookstores will reserve a copy in your name. Or you can order one today by calling 1-800-955-5493.

Mark Fuhrman, rogue cop? Or wronged detective? Decide for yourself... after reading *Murder in Brentwood*.

### From Vanity Fair

***"Latin and Black officers who worked with him attested to his skill and said in later interviews that they saw no racist underpinnings in him. . . . The Los Angeles County public defender's office last year revealed no indications that he had lied, planted evidence, or engaged in racial slurs."***

— H.G. BISSINGER, *VANITY FAIR*

### From Vince Bugliosi

***"A terrible, perhaps irrevocable, injustice has been perpetrated against Mark Fuhrman and all fair minded people can only hope that this book is Mark Fuhrman's first step in a successful effort to rehabilitate his image with the American people."***

— FROM THE FOREWORD OF *MURDER IN BRENTWOOD*

### From the Author

***"This is not a book of justification or excuse but one of truth. It is not an easy task for me, for all of us hide portions of our lives that we hope will never be judged by our neighbors, let alone the world. . . ."***

— FROM THE PROLOGUE, BY MARK FUHRMAN

**Available at your local book stores February 19th or call 1-800-955-5493.**

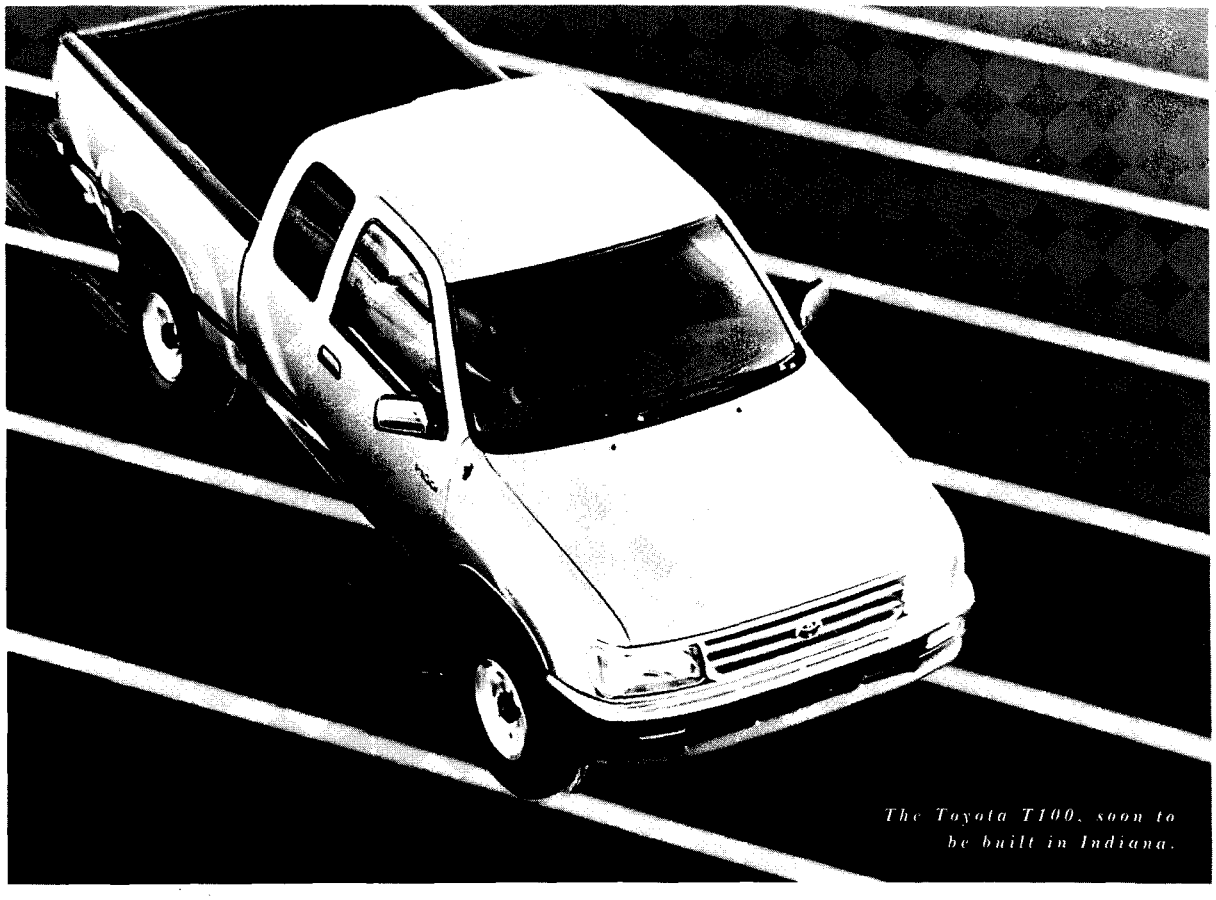
NPR-FUHR

REGNERY PUBLISHING, INC.
*Since 1947 • An Eagle Publishing Company*

REGNERY PUBLISHING • 422 FIRST STREET, S.E. • WASHINGTON, D.C. 20003

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# Jobs, investment, ECONOMIC GROWTH.




© 1996 Toyota Motor Corporate Services of North America, Inc.

# It's amazing what this TRUCK WILL CARRY.

SINCE 1986, when Toyota first began building vehicles in this country, we've been reinvesting in the community. Today, Toyota builds more than 630,000 vehicles in America every year. In fact, more than half the vehicles we sell in the U.S. are built here. With new plants in Indiana and West Virginia on the way, we're furthering our investment in American manufacturing and jobs. And that's an investment that provides economic opportunities, literally, by the truckload.

*INVESTING IN THE THINGS WE ALL CARE ABOUT.* **TOYOTA**

*For more information about Toyota in America visit our web site at http://www.toyotausa.com or write Toyota Motor Corporate Services, 9 West 57th Street, Suite 4900-X5, New York, New York 10019*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED